FUGUE WRITING

A. MADELEY RICHARDSON

NEW YORK: THE H. W. GRAY CO.
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Charles E. Luoma

HELPS TO
FUGUE WRITING

BASED ON BACH'S "DAS WOHLTEMPERIRTE KLAVIER"

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Author of "The Psalms, Their Structure and Musical Rendering," The Southwark Psalter, "Church Music," for the Clergy, "Choir Training, Based on Voice Production," "The Choirtrainer's Art," "Modern Organ Accompaniment," "Extempore Playing," etc., etc.

With a Foreword by

RUBIN GOLDMARK

Head of the Composition Department of the Juilliard School of Music

Price $1.50

"What do you mean by your mountainous fugues?"
—Browning

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TO

DR. FRANK DAMROSCH

IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION

OF MANY YEARS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge his great indebtedness to Dr. Percy Goetschuis, with whom he has worked in close and happy association for seventeen years. The present volume is the outcome of that association, combined with the study of all the important works of this eminent theorist. He also desires to offer warm thanks to Mr. Rubin Goldmark for kind advice, for valuable suggestions and for a much appreciated Foreword.

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FOREWORD

"All art," writes Walter Pater, "constantly aspires towards the condition of music. . . . For, while in other works of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it. . . . It is the art of music which most completely realizes this artistic ideal, the perfect identification of form and matter. . . . Music then . . . is the true type, or measure of perfected art."

In the field of musical composition, a thorough mastery of the contrapuntal style is a great step towards realizing this ideal—the blending of form and matter. Among the contrapuntal forms, the Fugue is acknowledged to be the highest and finest development. Its importance cannot be too strongly emphasized, in order to attain definiteness of expression, power of expanding the musical germ or "cellule" (as Vincent D'Indy calls it) and command of a real polyphony—that is, the interweaving and independence of the individual parts. Thus the Composer who has mastered, and who excels in this intricate branch of his art, is well on the way to a successful artistic technique.

The greatest musical form is, of course, Sonata Form (as exemplified in the Sonata, Quartet, Overture, Concerto, Symphony, etc.). But it is the Fugue writer's skill that makes possible the development portion of Sonata Form. The Fugue presents many of the intellectual elements of the Sonata in a condensed and epitomized form.

Many excellent books have been written about the Fugue. But the subject is so often approached from a purely theoretic point of view through the mere analysis of its various parts and features, that the student does not receive sufficient assistance in the actual process of construction.

The plan of the present volume is rather novel. Instead of presenting stereotyped rules and general principles, it takes the concrete examples contained in the greatest collection of Fugues ever written, and from them deduces rules and guides to lead the way to successful Fugue writing. It assumes that what Bach does must be right; what Bach does not do need not be insisted upon as essential.

I am personally convinced that this is the best way of teaching this very important and difficult subject, and I welcome "Helps to Fugue Writing" as a much needed and long awaited contribution to this fascinating study.

It is my hope that this work will be largely used, and I have great pleasure in giving it my hearty commendation.

RUBIN GOLDMARK

New York
November the 2nd, 1929

Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY

The value and importance of the study of Fugue in the training of every musical composer cannot be overestimated. In it are contained and illustrated all the devices which raise great music to a high plane of development and give to the developed composition a claim to be ranked as the highest of all art work.

Cherubini goes so far as to say "The young composer, once having mastered the instructions upon Fugue, will have no more need of lessons, but will be able to write with purity in all styles, and will with ease, while studying the forms of different kinds of composition, acquire the power of expressing clearly his own ideas, so as to produce the effect he desires."

Many books upon the subject are available, of which may be mentioned Goetschius' "Applied Counterpoint," "Fugue" by Higgs, "Fugue" by Prout, "Studies in Fugue," Kitson, Cherubini's "Counterpoint and Fugue," Brook Sampson's "Analyses of Bach's Forty-eight Fugues."

The present volume, aiming to supplement those already in use, represents an endeavor to supply to the student further help on some of the points upon which the writer's experience has shewn that more help would be welcomed.

The following pages will deal only with the Fugue form as illustrated in Bach's "Well Tempered Clavichord."

It is felt that the student who has mastered the teaching of these immortal works will have little trouble in applying his skill to the writing of fugues in other styles. This plan will simplify reference, as every student has these fugues always at hand, whereas, were quotations made, and illustrations given, from other works, it would often be difficult, if not impossible, for the student to verify them.

These famous forty-eight are, of course, written for the clavichord, and may be classified as scholastic fugues, as distinguished from the "concert" fugue, for keyboard (pianoforte or organ), string quartet or orchestra; and from the vocal fugue, where the music is largely guided by the words.

These fugues, to be sure, were written for the clavichord, but they are to be regarded as masterpieces of interweaving contrapuntal lines, rather than as the means of displaying the quality of a particular instrument. They may effectively be played on any keyed instrument, or by strings: and even, in some cases, might be rendered by human voices.

Chapter II

THE FUGUE AS A WHOLE

Before studying the various details of a fugue, it will be advisable to consider its composition as a whole, noticing the way in which one division leads to another and the manner in which the logical growth is carried on, until the complete work holds together as a single art form.

The main divisions are:—

The Exposition,
the middle section, and
the final section (sometimes called the "recapitulation").

In the exposition we must examine

the subject,
the answer,
the counter-subject (one or more),
and, perhaps, codettas.

In the middle section we shall look for restatements of the theme in new keys and with other modifications.

Between these statements will occur the episodes, or digressions, which, in some cases, constitute the outstanding evidences of the composer's skill.

In the final section we shall see a return to the subject in the original key, stated in a way still more interesting than before, and frequently followed by the Coda.

With these headings in mind, the student should carefully analyse all, or many of, the fugues in "The Well Tempered Clavichord."

The best plan is to take any fugue and copy it out in open score. This way of working cannot be too highly recommended to the student who is determined to rise in contrapuntal power; and we know it is the way the great composers themselves learnt to write music. Bacon's saying that "writing makes an exact man" cannot be controverted. But the writer knows that in these hurrying days, when a multitude of activities present themselves on all sides, some readers will be unable to find the necessary time for this thorough way of working.

Then the next best thing will be to use an edition of the fugues in open score (e.g. the one edited by Vincent and published by Schirmer) and upon this write in his complete analysis.

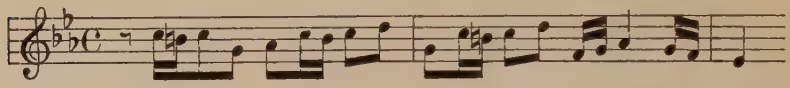
With a view to showing how to do this, one of the fugues will now be taken and subjected to analysis in the next chapter.

Chapter III

ANALYSIS OF FUGUE No. 2, IN C MINOR

Fugue No. 1, beautiful and interesting as it is, is not a helpful model for the beginner, on account of its irregular and unusual structure. No. 2, however, will serve excellently. With this fugue open before us then we will proceed to its analysis.

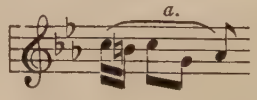
First the subject, announced by the Alto, or middle voice:

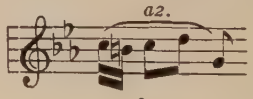


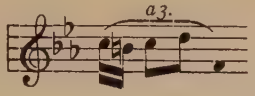
This is developed from a figure reproduced three times, followed by another which subdivides into two parts.

Notice the rhythm ⏑ ⏑ – – 𝅗𝅥. (It may here be pointed out that the bar lines in these works are sometimes misleading, and it may be doubted whether Bach gave to them the same meaning as the present day student is instructed to do. The beginner is taught that in counting four he must consider the first beat as bearing a strong accent and the third a weaker one. If this is applied to the present subject the trained ear will rebel, for it is clear that the first three groups are cast in the same rhythm and should not be differently accented. Frequently, when Bach uses 4/4 time he will employ the first and third beats indifferently in places where he could not possibly intend to convey a varied rhythmic effect; vide Fugue 8, where the subject is announced on the first beat with the answer on the third. It would be absurd to suppose that this is meant for "cross rhythm." See also Nos. 16, 27, 28, 29, 33, 43.

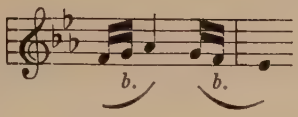
It will be remembered that the bar line only came into general use about the year 1600, and was originally intended merely to indicate the place where the various vocal parts coincided. Bach, born 1685, probably understood the matter this way, and trusted to his melodic lines to give their own rhythm. According to modern ideas the time signature here should be 2/4 or 4/8, and the subject we are looking at would then be four bars in length).

Now we may call this fig. *a*.  the next, *a2*, is developed from it by taking the last three tones in contrary motion, the line ⌄ becoming ⌃, the



next, *a3*, is this latter 

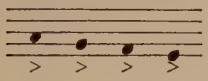
repeated with extended

interval. Then follow 

three rapid notes which

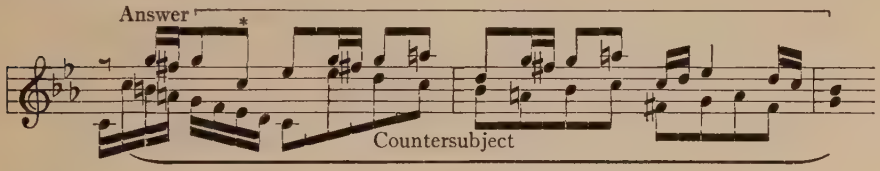
are derived in rhythm from the beginning of the subject, and are reproduced in contrary motion.

Look again at the complete subject, and notice that it commences on the tonic note and ends on the mediant. The first accent is on A flat, the second on G, the third on F, and the last on E flat; a gradually descending line.



Here we have the musical law of unity and variety illustrated in a fascinating way, the first figure being presented three times, with increasing interest, the second, twice with a change of contrary motion and cross rhythm.

The next two bars: shew the Answer taken by the soprano, with the alto giving the countersubject.

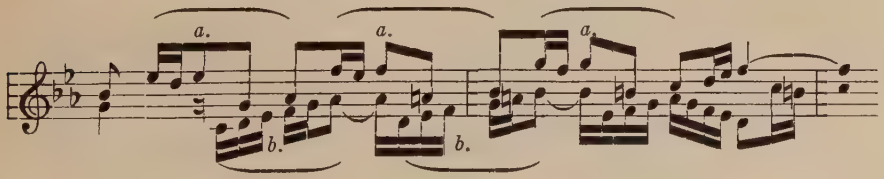


The answer is tonal, i.e. while being a transposition of the subject up a fifth, it has a slight change in the melodic line at * to make the dominant note correspond with the tonic.

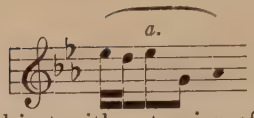
The countersubject is written in double counterpoint at the 15th (double octave), which means that when inverted the musical effect will be just as satisfactory as in the original position.

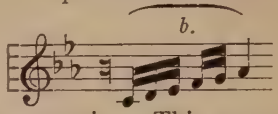
Notice that the countersubject, while perfectly harmonising with the subject, gives a new melody as interesting and characteristic as the subject.

The two following bars: are an interlude, deferring the entry of the third



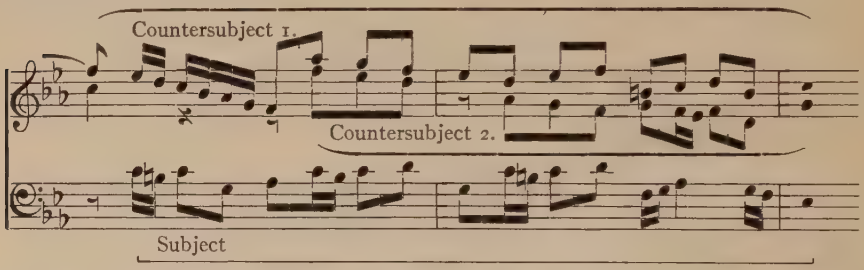
voice. This is usually called Codetta.

The figure 

is obviously derived from the first figures of the subject with extension of interval. It is reproduced three times in sequence a step up. It is accompanied by 

taken from the countersubject, and used in contrary motion. This accompanies fig. *a* in sequence, and both are rounded off at the fourth group, to lead into the appearance of the subject.

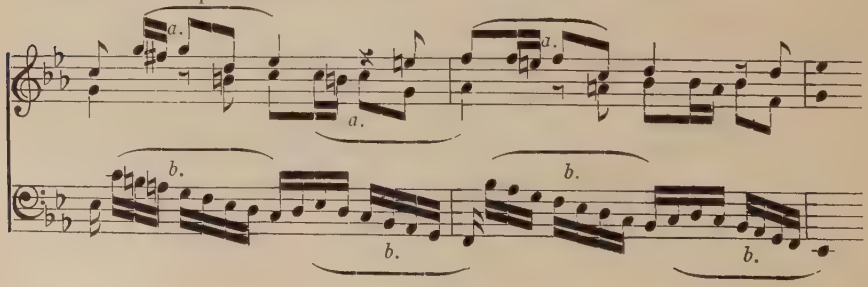
This codetta is written in double counterpoint at the twelfth, i.e. it can be inverted at the octave as usual, and also at the twelfth, by transposing the upper voice a twelfth down or the lower one a twelfth up. This is important and will be discussed later.

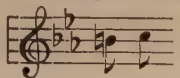


Now follows: the subject in the bass, with the countersubject as before in the soprano, while the alto has a new melodic line. What is this? It is a second countersubject combining with the other two lines in triple counterpoint, i.e. counterpoint written in such a way that any of the three lines may be placed in any position with equally good effect. More will be said about this later. From now onwards these three lines are always used together. (Some theorists would call the present composition a "triple fugue"; the simpler name is a fugue with two countersubjects.)

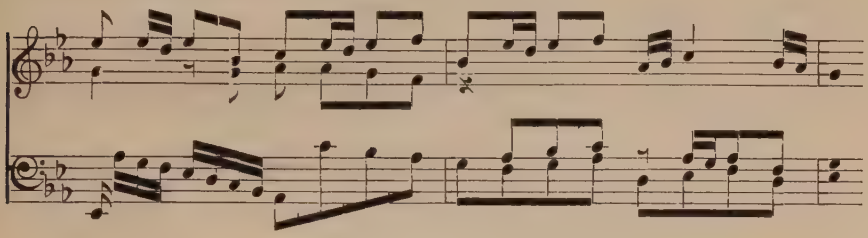
We have now reached the conclusion of the exposition of the fugue, each voice having stated the subject or answer in either tonic or dominant key.

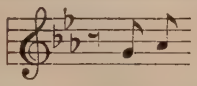
Next follows: Episode 1:



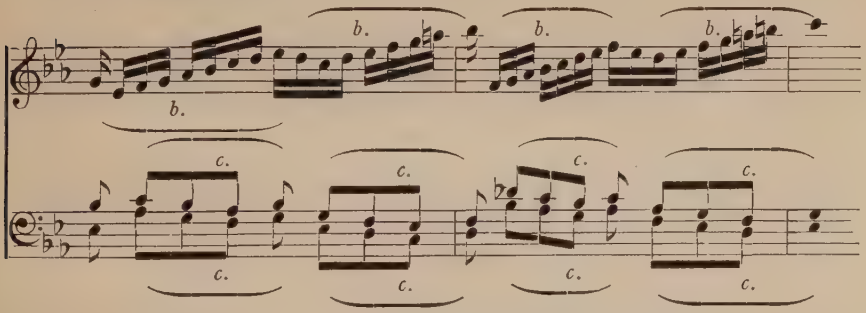
Here the soprano leads with figure *a*, answered by imitation at the fourth in the alto, the two notes  being added to complete the harmony. This is accompanied by figure *b* in the bass, which will be regarded as the beginning of countersubject 1. As there are only three voices available the bass reproduces figure *b* a sixth below, uniting the two statements by a passing note. This whole bar is given then again in sequence a step lower.

It will be noticed that these sequences effect modulations through C minor, F minor, B flat to E flat, in which key follows:



Here the soprano states the subject in E flat,—the relative major key. The bass has countersubject 1, and the alto, countersubject 2. The two additional notes in the alto  are used in this place in the episode we have just examined. There is a slight change in countersubject 2, the middle notes being taken by contrary motion. This is an unessential modification.

Next occurs Episode 2.

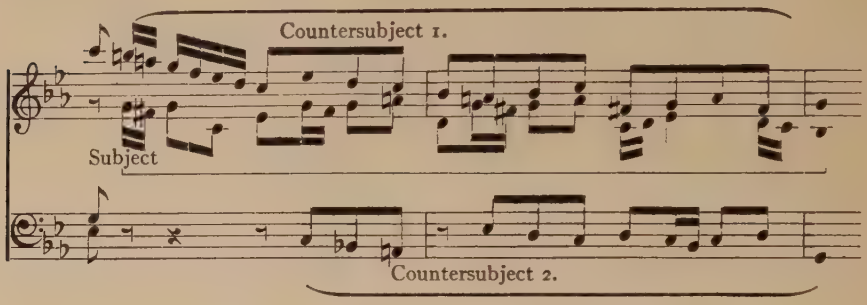


Here we start in E flat and modulate through B flat to C minor.

It will be noticed that this episode is formed of figure *b* in soprano, now in contrary motion, accompanied by figure *c*; which is found in countersubject 2 —its second figure. This latter is used in thirds by alto and bass, with sequence a fourth lower, while the soprano takes its sequence a fifth higher. This occupies one bar. Then, instead of continuing in the same direction, the two lower voices shift the sequence a fifth up, while the soprano takes a fourth below,

giving the effect of a one-bar design duplicated in sequence a step up. Here we may admire another masterly illustration of unity with variety. The material used includes only two beats; the way in which it is arranged supplies interest for eight beats.

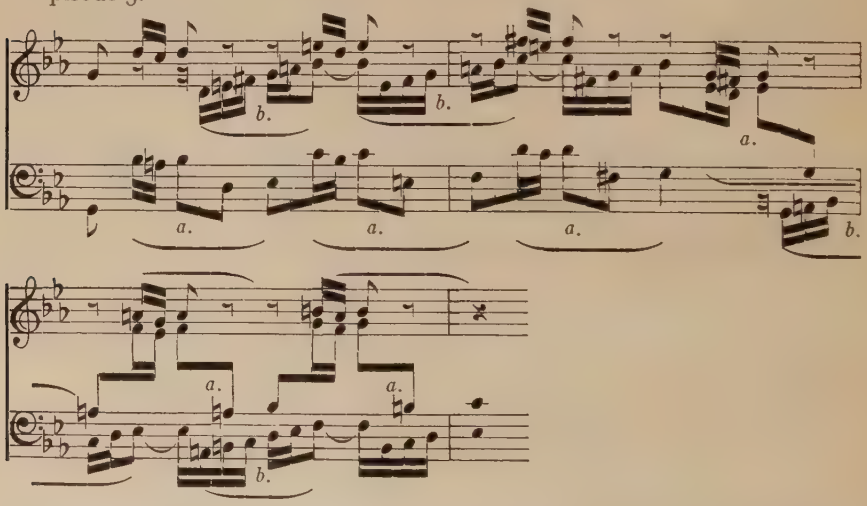
Now follows:



Here is the answer in the alto, countersubject 1 in the soprano and countersubject 2 in the bass. The latter is now heard for the first time as the lowest part. On the first beat of bar 17 we have a cadence in G minor.

The next episode is longer than the first, and is of peculiar interest.

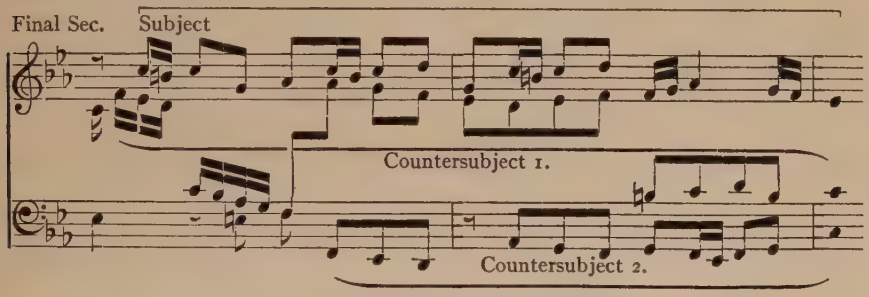
Episode 3.



The bass now has figure *a* and the alto, figure *b*. Let the reader turn to the codetta, bar 5, and he will see that we have here the two melodic lines inverted in double counterpoint at the 12th. The soprano duplicates the first three notes in thirds, enriching the harmony.

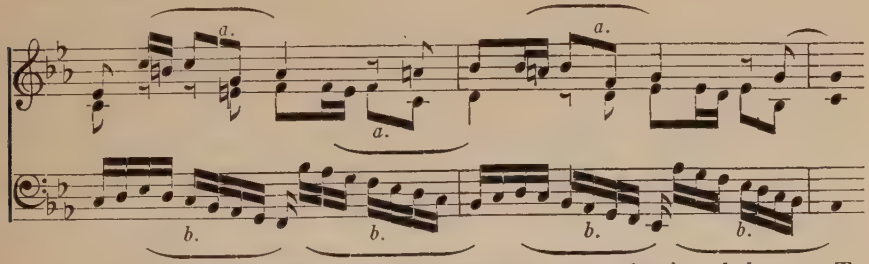
As in the codetta, these combined figures are reproduced in sequence twice, occupying six beats. The cross relations will be noticed, justified by sequence; otherwise impossible.

The material of 17 to 18½ is now reproduced in bars 18½ to 19, the alto having figure *a* and the bass figure *b*, but the inversion is not now at the 12th but at the octave. Examine this carefully. The whole is transposed a fifth lower, resulting in modulation to the original tonic, in which key the final section will now be given.

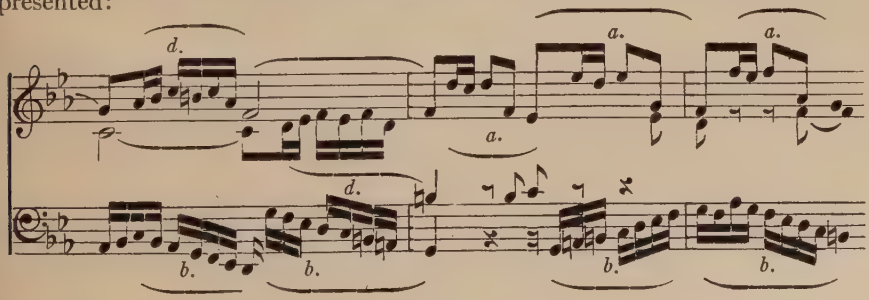


Here the subject is stated in the soprano, countersubject 1 in the alto, and countersubject 2 in the bass. Notice that this is a new arrangement of the two lines.

Now follows Episode 4, from bar 22 to 26½. It subdivides into two sections. First:—

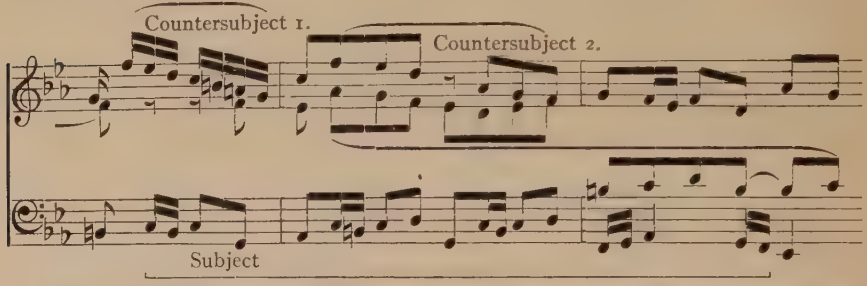


Up to this point we have simply Episode 1 transposed a fourth lower. To this is now added two and a half bars more in which further devices will be presented:

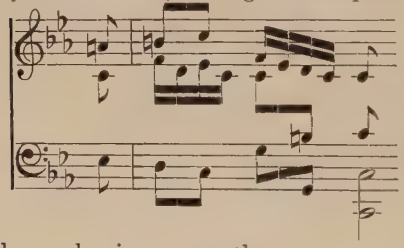


Here figure *b* continues in the bass. The soprano has figure *d*, derived from *a*, answered by the alto in imitation at the fourth. In bar 25 figure *a* appears in a new form, the leap of a sixth, instead of turning up, leads down. This is twice reproduced in sequence a step up, joined in by figure *b*, first in contrary motion, then direct, leading to the dominant seventh harmony.

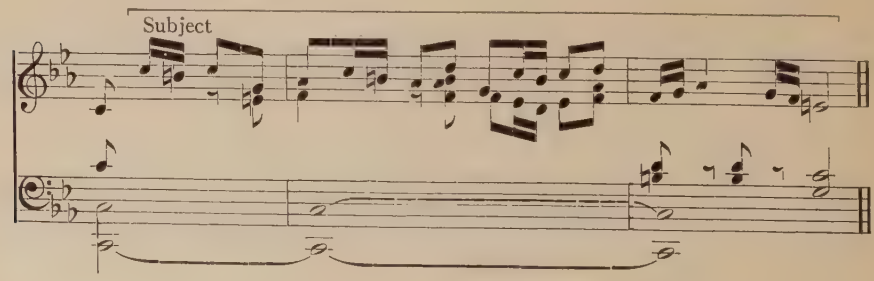
Now follows:—



Here we have the subject in the bass, while the two upper voices present the two countersubjects. There is, however, an irregularity. On comparing this with bar 7, it will be seen that countersubject 1 is stated by the soprano and then passed on to the alto, while the soprano takes up countersubject 2. This is clearly done for variety, to avoid these bars presenting an exact reproduction of the former statement. In passing, notice that the subject here starts on the third beat of the bar, instead of the first, supplying another illustration of what was referred to at the beginning of this chapter. There is evidently here no thought of cross rhythm. The subject ends with an inverted cadence, followed by an extension, leading to an emphatic conclusion, thus:—



These three beats are the only part of the fugue which may be called independent material, not derived from the subject or its companions. Thus ends the fugue, as a strictly contrapuntal work. The composer, however, adds a Coda in free style with the subject in the soprano newly harmonised in the homophonic manner, thus:—



The bass sustains a tonic organ point. The middle voice no longer gives a contrapuntal line, but merely fills in chords as may be conveniently played by the right hand.

Notice that the final cadence has the third in soprano. This is major, following the old rule prevalent before Bach's day which forbade the concluding of a piece of music with a minor third.

Having now studied the characteristic features of a complete fugue, it is time to consider the various divisions in detail.

Chapter IV

THE SUBJECT

The subject is the melodic statement from which the whole fugue is developed, and is therefore its most important feature.

Not every good melody will make a good fugue subject. In the Bach book we have forty-eight admirable subjects. A careful study of them all will assist the student.

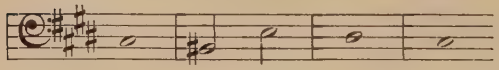
These subjects present a wonderful collection of melodies, each with its own individual characteristics, distinguishing it clearly from its companions and making its identity as unmistakable as a character from Shakespeare or Dickens.

The reader should write out and memorise all these subjects, examining them minutely from the points of view of

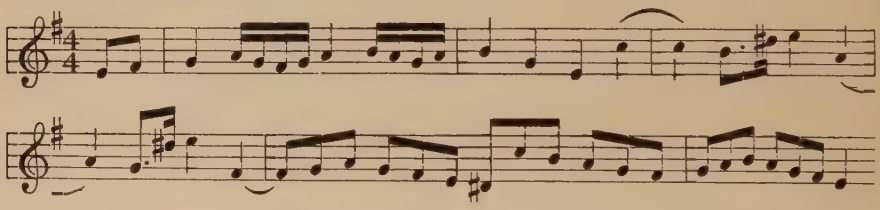
1. length,
2. tonality,
3. rhythm, and
4. melodic curve.

It is the combination of these qualities which gives the individual characteristics.

1. The Bach subjects vary in length from four or five notes, as, e.g.



to as many as forty-one, e.g.



It may be mentioned that it is by no means the rule that the most elaborate subjects make the greatest fugues. Two of the most interesting numbers of the present collection have the simplest subjects (Nos. 3 and 33). The compass varies from a fourth to an eleventh. Subjects with a small compass are the easier of manipulation.

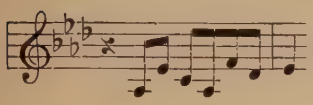
2. Tonality. Should a subject modulate? Out of the forty-eight, forty-one are without modulation.

Only seven modulate, as follows: Nos. 7, 10, 18, 19, and 24 to dominant, No. 14 to dominant and back, No. 37 to subdominant and back.

It is evident that Bach preferred a subject without modulation; and the reason is clear. Variety and contrast are desirable. If then the exposition is confined to the tonic and dominant keys, giving a feeling of harmonic repose, the appearance of new keys after this section will give the contrast that would be lost if there had been already much change of tonality. Here restraint and economy are vital. If the available forces are used too soon they will lose their effect in the later developments.

3. Apart from other considerations, the rhythm in these melodies is itself an interesting study.

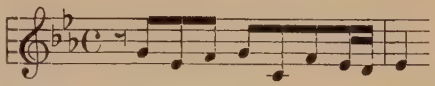
A few subjects have uniform rhythm throughout, e. g. No. 17



No. 28.

See also Nos. 42, 46, 10, 24, and 39.

Others have slight rhythmic changes, e. g. No. 26.



Others have several different groupings, as No. 46, with this design:

Compare this with the original and write out in a similar way the rhythm of all the subjects.

4. It is, however, when we come to melodic outline that the most characteristic features present themselves. The combination of outline and rhythm are what give to a melody its identity.

Rising and falling curves are found in endless variety. Rhythmic patterns are shown to have innumerable possibilities. With the two working together the melodic interest culminates.

It is now the time to make a careful study of the various subjects and to see what plan Bach follows.

At the outset it should be noted that these themes may be looked upon as melodic journeys from one point to another. Where, then, do they start? and where finish?

Out of the forty-eight subjects, twenty-nine begin on the tonic note, seventeen on the dominant, one on the supertonic and one on the leading tone. It is clear at once that Bach regarded the tonic as the best starting place, or, if not the tonic, then the dominant. Let the student start his own subjects accordingly.

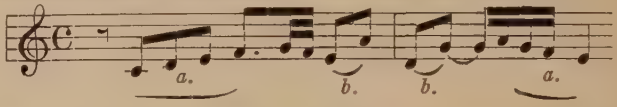
Twenty-six of the subjects conclude on the mediant, fourteen on the tonic. Clearly then the mediant is the best note for the finish, and after it the tonic. The advantage of the mediant termination is that it gives a cadential impression without any feeling of finality, whereas with a tonic close there is always the sensation of a perfect cadence to be guarded against. Of the remaining eight

subjects, four end on the tonic of the dominant key, two end in the dominant, one on the leading tone, (No. 15), and one on the mediant of the dominant key (No. 10). These will be regarded as exceptional, and not to be imitated by the student.

The whole subject may then be regarded as a journey between the initial and the final note; and this will present a rising or a falling line, with each step increasing the interest.

A short subject may present a single figure; a longer one always subdivides into members which are duplicated by sequence or by repetition, either simply or with variation.

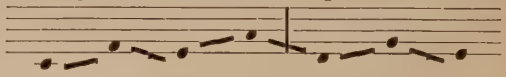
The individual subjects may now be analysed from these various points of view. Take No. 1.



This starts on the tonic and ends on the mediant. Figure *a* is used in diminution and in contrary motion at the end, and this is frequently reproduced as supplemental material during the course of the fugue.

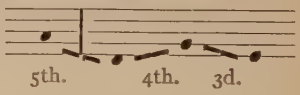
Next, we see a leap of a fourth (figure *b*). This is reproduced in sequence and also is utilized as incidental material later in the fugue.

Now observe in bar 1, after leaving the tonic, the first prominent note is F, followed by E, leaping to A. Here we have reached the climax

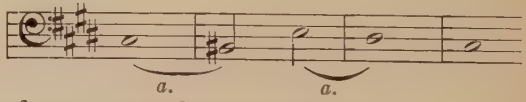


of the journey. We are at the top of the hill. Then comes a gradual descent to the end; E, A, followed by D, G, leading to the concluding mediant, E.

Other points may be noticed in the whole line. For instance, the gradual closing together towards the end, thus:

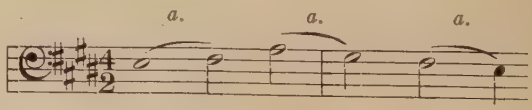


The shortest subject is No. 4.

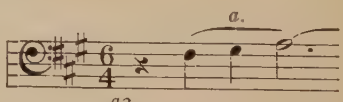


This may be subdivided into figure *a*, reproduced in sequence.

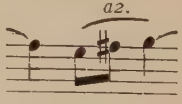
Similarly, No. 33 has a figure *a* reproduced in contrary motion and in sequence.

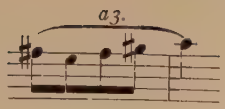


No. 14 is developed from the first three steps of the scale, which may be called figure *a*.

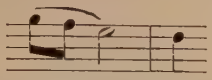


This is followed by a varied sequence, (*a* 2)

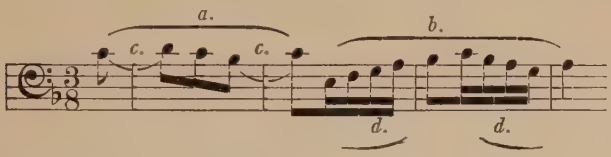


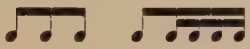
and then (*a* 3). 

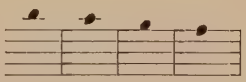
We are now at the summit, and the same figure descends

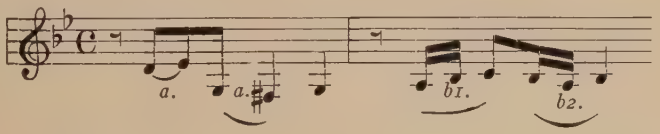
followed by 

which brings us to the final tonic. We have had the germ figure reproduced four times, following the curve

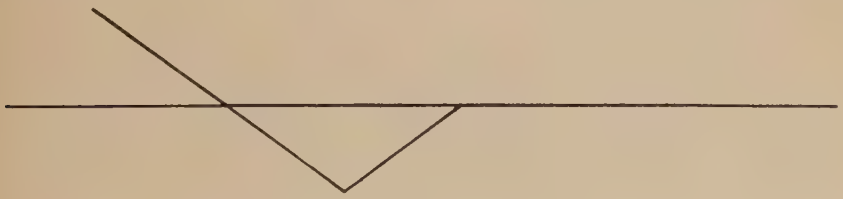
No. 11: 

has rhythm: 

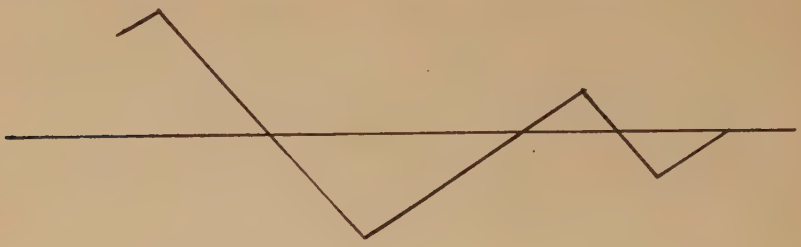
It starts on the dominant and ends on the mediant, and its accents have a gradual descent, thus: 
The whole subject subdivides into (*a*) and (*b*). From (*a*) is taken (*c*), used twice. From (*b*) there is (*d*), used twice.

No. 16: 

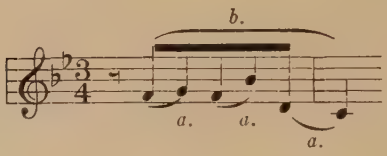
begins on the dominant, descends to the tonic and ends on the mediant, with this curve



The first note rises a step (fig. *a*), the answering tonic falls a step (*a*). The line then walks up till it reaches a note above its destination, proceeding to fall to the final. Figure (*b 1*) suggests (*b 2*). The whole line now is

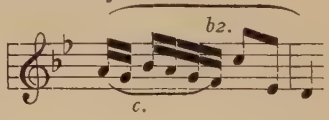


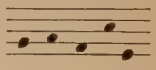
Consider now No. 21:

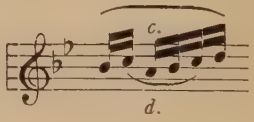


Here is the tonic chord outlined leading to the supertonic note.

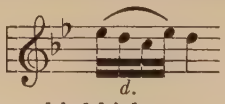
The whole figure is derived from two notes (fig. *a*), by repetition, change of interval and contrary motion.

The next 

is a varied version of 

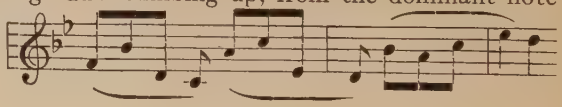
giving a varied sequence a step up. Then follows: 

which is the contrary motion of the first half of (*b 2*)

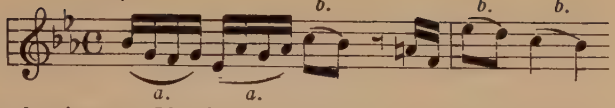
This: 

is from the middle of figure *c*, taken by retrograde motion a third higher.

The whole subject gives a gradual climbing up, from the dominant note to the mediant in the upper octave, thus:

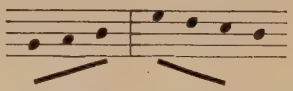


No. 7:

One more subject, 

modulates from tonic to dominant. The first two beats centre round the notes G and A, with reversed motion

figure (*a*) rising to the note B, preceded by C (fig. *b*). A figure dropping a third, taken from the preceding material, leads to figure (*b*) a third higher, followed by descending sequence.

The outline of the whole presents itself thus: 

If the student will now proceed to analyse the rest of the forty-eight subjects in a corresponding manner, he will find that, when he has finished, he will be able to write in a similar spirit.

The whole may be summarized as unity, secured by using a given figure more than once, with variety, obtained by varied repetition or sequence, and progress, seen in advancing from one point to another, either higher or lower.

Notice first the initial and the final notes. Then observe where the emphasis falls on the intermediate tones. After that examine the figures used to connect these tones, and see in what manner they are introduced.

Chapter V

THE ANSWER

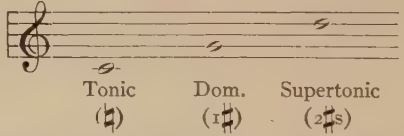
The number of voices employed in the present collection of fugues varies from two to five. There is one two-part fugue. There are twenty-seven in three parts, eighteen in four parts and only two in five parts.

Whatever the number of voices, the second voice invariably states the subject transposed to the dominant key, a fourth down or a fifth up. Fugues have been written with the answer in the subdominant key, but there are none in this collection.

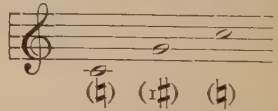
In some cases this transposition is exact. The answer is then called "real" and the fugue is a "real fugue." In many cases, however, the melody is slightly changed, when the answer is called "tonal" and the fugue a "tonal fugue."

Twenty out of the forty-eight have real answers, and twenty-eight, tonal. These latter are Nos. 7, 18, 24, 23, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, and 48. The student should have a clear idea as to (a) why a change is necessary, (b) how it is made.

Assuming that the fugue has three or four voices, each of these voices must start its career in the exposition by a statement of the theme, which statements will alternate as subject and answer. The subject, having been announced in the tonic key, the second voice, in the dominant key, will be a fifth up or a fourth down. If this same relationship were reproduced and the next voice appeared another fifth up, we should arrive at the supertonic key (major, in a major key), which is unrelated to the tonic, cannot be used in the exposition, and is even forbidden during the course of the fugue:



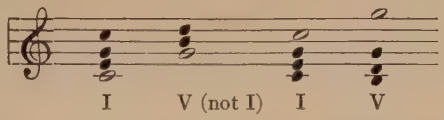
This shews the necessity for the third voice to return to the tonic key, and scarcely calls for discussion. The order will then be



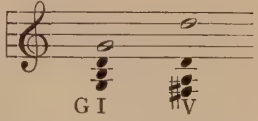
If, however, the answer fits on to the end of the subject at a fifth, above, obviously it is not likely that it will fit so well at a fourth. Change will frequently be necessary. The old writers gave elaborate and rather obscure rules for these changes. An endeavor will here be made to simplify them.

RULE 1. *If the subject leaps from tonic to dominant the answer must leap from dominant to tonic.* This is necessary because of the fact that the subject is to be considered not only as a melody, but as a harmonic outline. The two notes in question will have to be used both as melody and as bass; therefore the dominant note cannot be harmonized with the tonic chord, but must have

dominant harmony, thus:

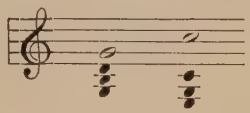


Now, if the answer were real, the result would be



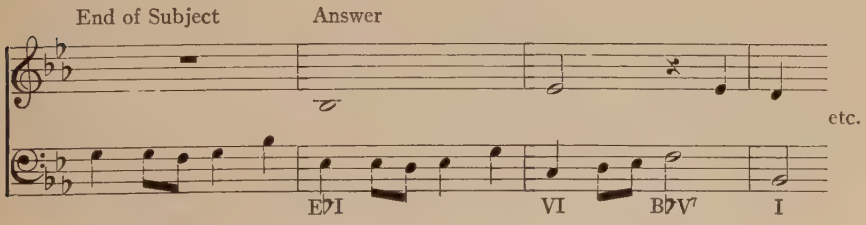
This is too sudden a change to be acceptable, for, assuming that the subject ended in tonic harmony, we should be confronted with the succession (in the key of C) I of C, I of G, V of G. The reader, experienced in modulation, needs no reminder that the normal way of modulating is to pass from the I (or VI) of the first key to the V of the next key, not from a I to a new I, as we should have here.

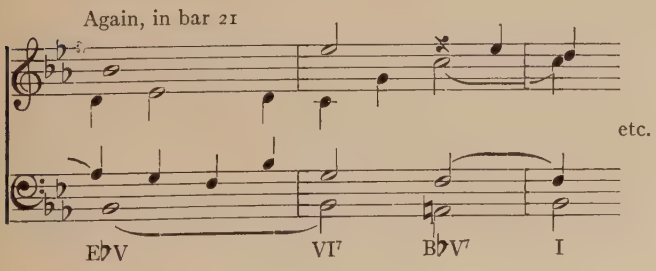
The only thing to do is to substitute



and follow this by the V of the new key (in this case G).

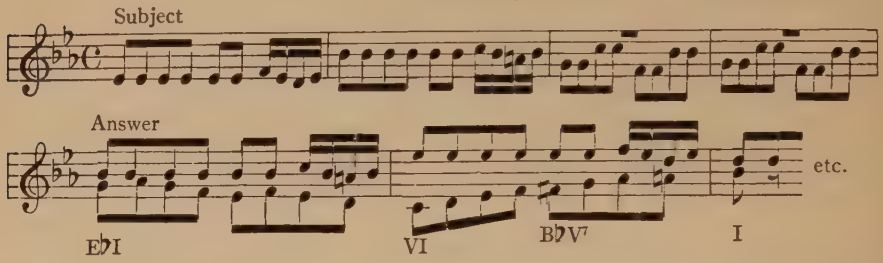
It will be seen that this is just what Bach does. For illustration: No. 31.





It will not be without interest to compare this with a fugal exposition by another great contrapuntist, when a subject is used with an almost identical outline, and it will be seen that the melodic treatment and the harmonic outline are the same as in the Bach quotation.

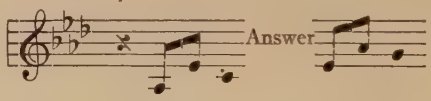
Mozart, Overture "Die Zauberflöte."



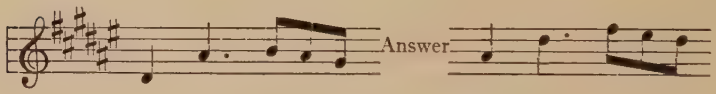
The reader may experiment with these illustrations by attempting to change the answers to the "real" formation. He will at once be convinced of the necessity for a "tonal" answer and of the logic underlying its use.

Any other leap at the beginning of the subject will take a real answer. Further illustrations of rule 1 are seen in Nos. 17, and 8.

No. 17



No. 8.

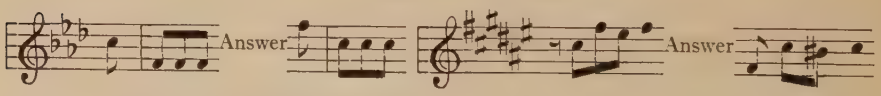


Refer to these fugues, see how these places are harmonized and test them by changing the melody to the "real" formation.

RULE. 2. By the same reasoning as above *the leap from dominant to tonic must be answered by tonic to dominant.*

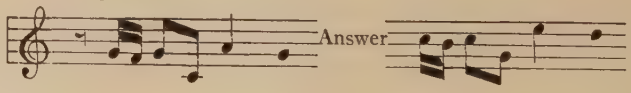
Illustrations:

No. 36 and No. 13.

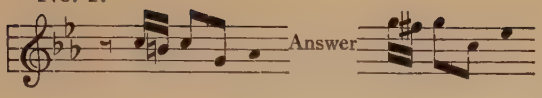


Sometimes the initial note, whether tonic or dominant, will be presented ornamentally, as for instance:

No. 25.

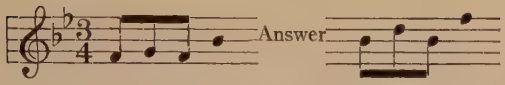


No. 2.



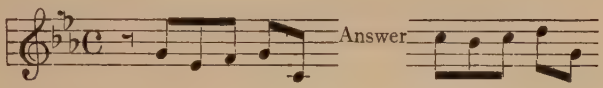
No. 35.

No. 21.

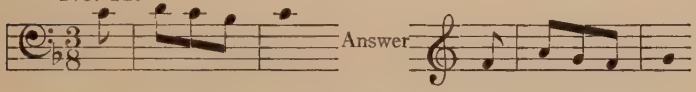


RULE 3. *When the subject begins with the dominant, without leaping to the tonic, this first note will be answered by the tonic, and the necessary change made immediately after it.* E. g.

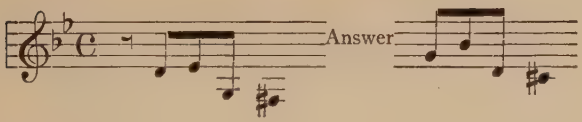
No. 26.



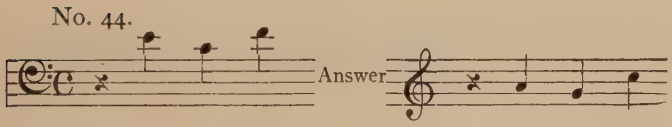
No. 11.



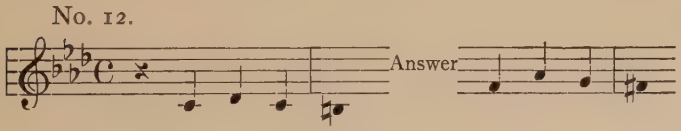
No. 16.



No. 44.



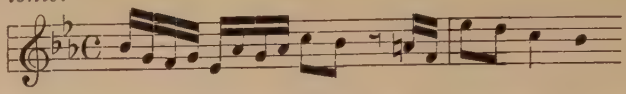
No. 12.



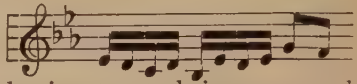
Here it will be seen that: *A subject in the tonic key, starting on the dominant note will be answered in the dominant key, starting on the tonic note.*

RULE 4. It remains to notice cases where the subject *modulates from the*

tonic to the dominant. These will be answered by a modulation *from the dominant to the tonic.*

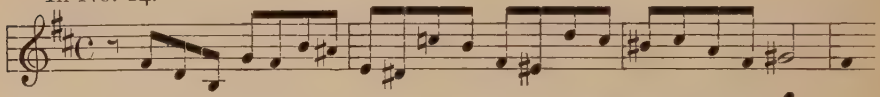
No. 7. 

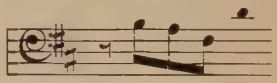
This melody subdivides after the third beat. The modulation commences with the second member.

The first member takes a tonal answer, as usual, thus: 

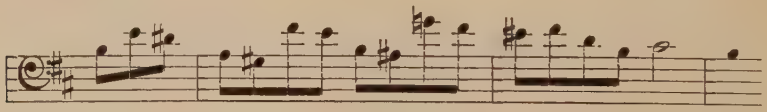
following the above explanation (rule 3), the dominant note being answered by the tonic. The second member, however, is in the dominant key. It will be transposed intact into the tonic key, thus:

In No. 24.

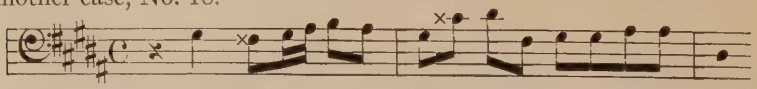


the answer to the first four notes follows rule 3. 

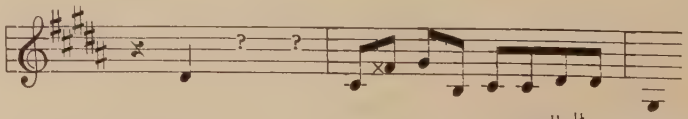
After this it is seen that a very elaborate chromatic line leads to a cadence in the dominant key (F sharp minor). A real answer to this line would lead to C sharp minor, whereas the key has to be B minor. It is necessary to shift down one step. The problem is, where to introduce the change. It is solved by making it at the earliest possible place, i.e. the next note. After this the melodic line remains intact.

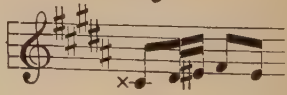


Another case, No. 18.



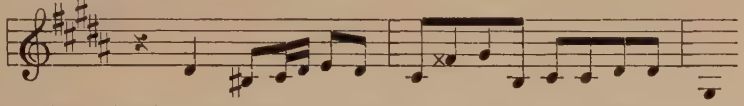
Here we commence on the tonic note and end on the tonic of the dominant key. The new key is entered at the first beat of bar 2. This then must be answered by the tonic key.



If the two missing beats were supplied thus: 

the result would be impossible cacophony. The only thing to do is to transpose this last group a step lower, making the necessary transposition on the second note of the melody,

thus:



The student should now study all the remaining tonal answers, the numbers of which were given on p. 22. A good plan is to take each subject, and, without looking at Bach's answer, write down the answer that seems to suggest itself in accordance with what has been said in this chapter. If the reader finds that his solution agrees with Bach's he has probably acquired sufficient knowledge to enable him to proceed to the next chapter.

Chapter VI

THE COUNTERSUBJECT

While the second voice gives the answer, the first one continues with a contrapuntal line. When this line is reproduced against the subject and answer at all, or many, of its subsequent appearances in the course of the fugue it is called the Countersubject.

This is the case in thirty-four fugues out of the forty-eight. In the remaining fourteen (viz. 1, 8, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 36, and 43) the absence of a regular countersubject is accounted for by other, and still more interesting, devices.

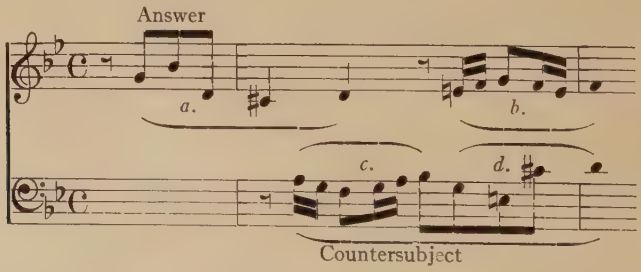
For the present, in his own work, it is best for the student to follow the old rule of always writing the first counterpoint as a countersubject.

The countersubject fits on to the end of the subject in an unbroken line, a portion of which sometimes represents a connecting link, or codetta. The skill of the composer is here shewn in making this continuation easy and natural, with no sign of a joint or break.

The countersubject is written in double (or invertible) counterpoint at the octave (or fifteenth) or at the twelfth; most usually the former.

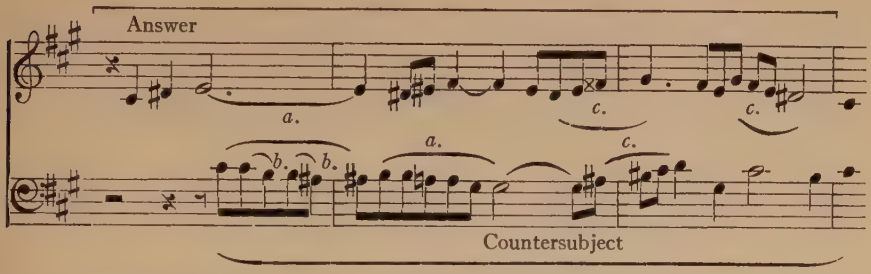
Later on it will be seen that the whole fugue is frequently derived from the melodic material of the subject and the countersubject.

The countersubject should appear, not as a mere accompaniment to the subject, but as a beautiful and significant melodic line, distinct from, while perfectly harmonising with, its companion. It is sometimes derived from the subject itself, as in No. 16:



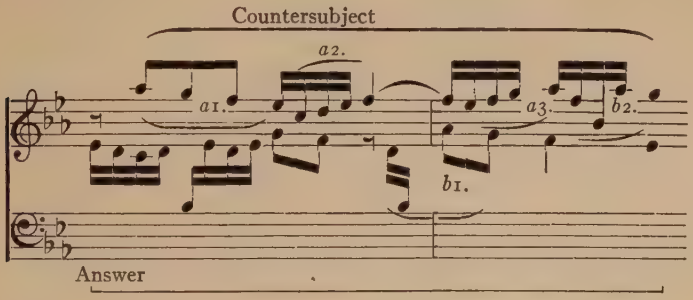
Here figure (*c*) is (*b*) inverted, while (*d*) is identical with (*a*) inverted. This is one of the most ingenious combinations in the whole volume, and should be carefully examined.

Or the countersubject may be strongly contrasted, which is the more usual plan; e.g. No. 14:



Here it will be seen that figure (*a*) is taken in sequence down, while the subject rises. Fig. (*a*) subdivides into sequences of (*b*), (*c*) is taken in imitation at the fourth.

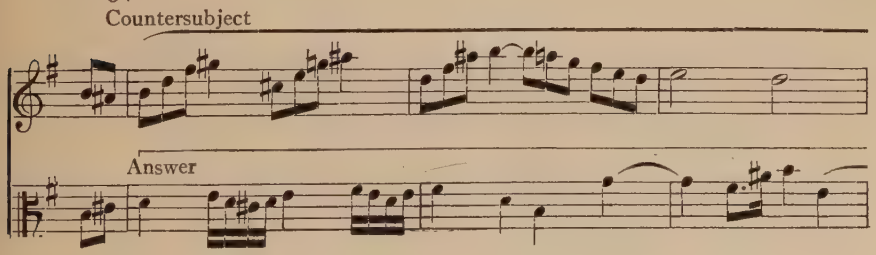
No. 7:

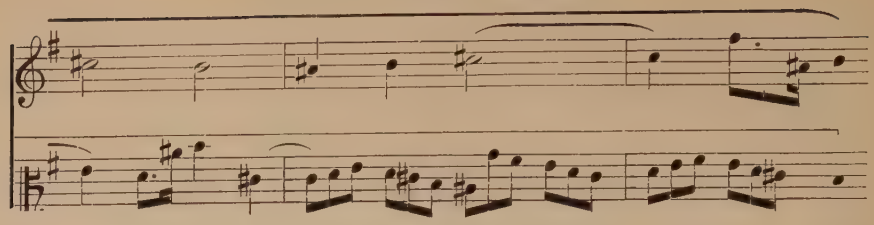


In this countersubject (*a* 1) counterpoints the first three beats of the answer, (*a* 2) is a reproduction in diminution and contrary motion, (*a* 3) is a sequence at the third; (*b* 2) is a version of (*b* 1), with diminution and change of one note.

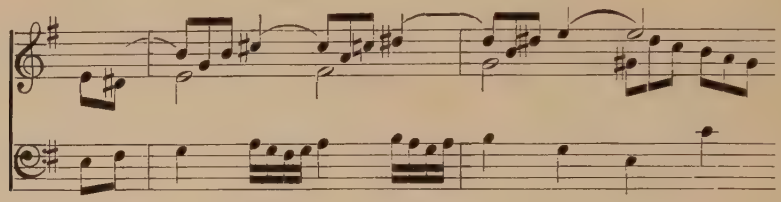
No. 34 is of special interest, and is perhaps unique. Here is its first appearance:

No. 34.





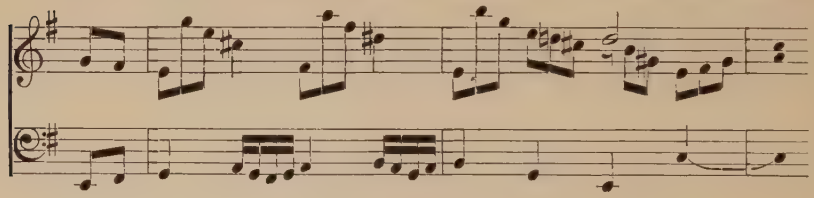
The countersubject may be subdivided at the third bar. The second half remains intact, but the first part reappears throughout the fugue in various guises. In bar 13, with the line distributed between two voices, thus:



Here we do not clearly *see* the countersubject, but when the passage is played it is distinctly heard between the alto and soprano.

Compare this with bar 24, where the same arrangement occurs.

In bar 72 appears another version, a variation of the original melody:



In fugue 44 is a very strongly contrasted countersubject:

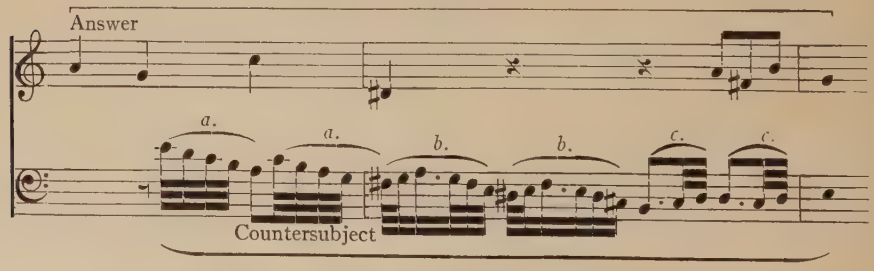
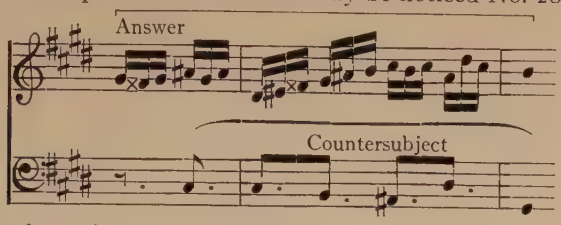
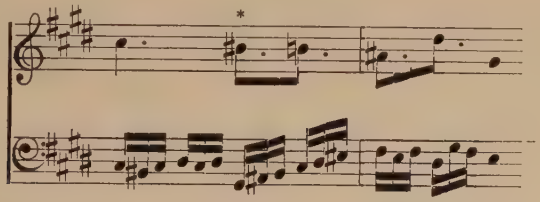


Figure (*a*) is taken in sequence a third down; figure (*b*) is given in the same manner; figure (*c*), of half the length, takes a free sequence up.

In double counterpoint at the twelfth may be noticed No. 28:

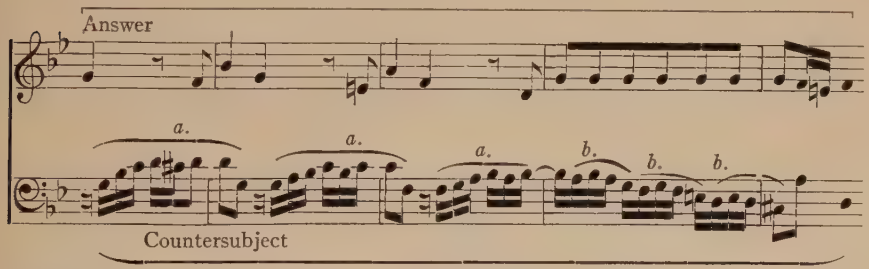


In bar 55 is the inversion at the twelfth, thus:

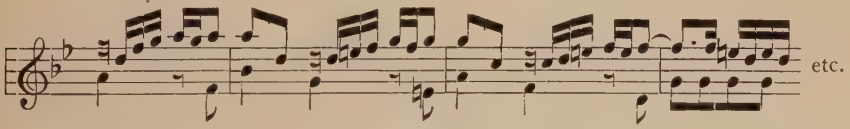


There is a slight variation at *, but this is unessential.

No. 40:

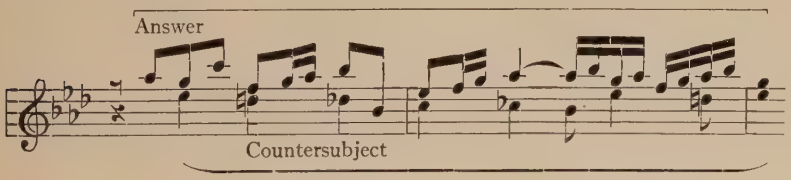


Notice the sequence of figure (*a*), then of figure (*b*). Here is the inversion of the twelfth, bar 28:

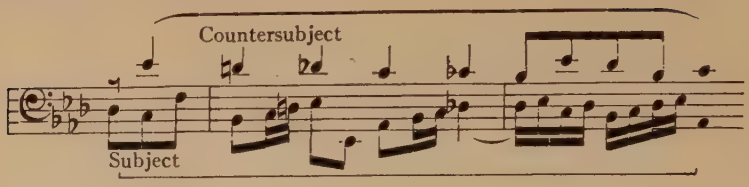


In other places there are inversions at the octave and the tenth, combined in a variety of ways.

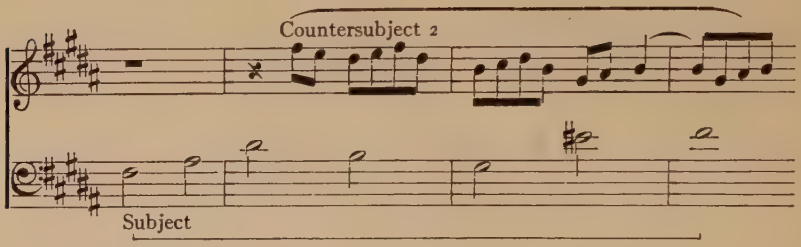
No. 41:



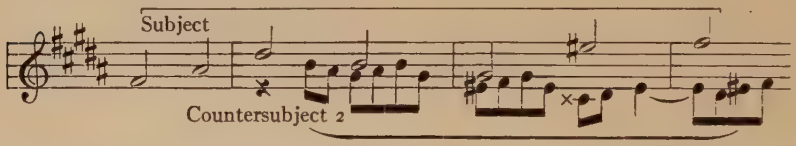
Inversion at the twelfth, bar 13:



No. 47, bar 27:



Inversion at the twelfth, bar 42:



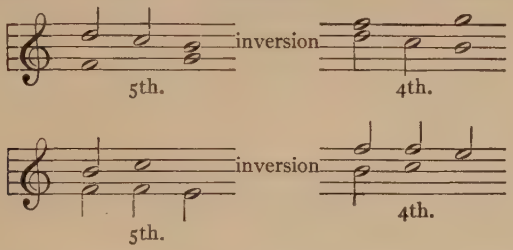
The student will now do well to examine and write out all the other regular countersubjects, noticing their various characteristics and memorizing them.

Chapter VII

DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT AT THE OCTAVE, FIFTEENTH, AND TWELFTH

Double (or invertible) counterpoint at the octave may be written by remembering that the fifth can never be used as a harmonic interval, since its inversion would present the forbidden fourth. Other intervals are available, as usual, the third becoming a sixth; the sixth, a third. These are the most frequently used. The diminished fifth appears as the contraction of the sixth, and inverts to the augmented fourth. The augmented fourth is the expansion of the third, and inverts to the diminished fifth.

The perfect fifth is available as a passing note or a suspension, as follows:



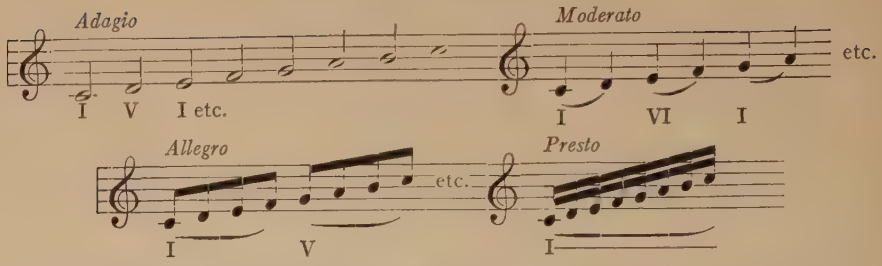
These harmonic outlines can, of course, be varied to any extent, by embellishment.

All two-part counterpoint must exhibit

1. Perfect melodic lines.
2. Perfect harmonic blending.
3. Contrast.

The second is secured by keeping in mind a harmonic background. The two lines must always imply definite chords, with their proper progressions. For the beginner it is a good thing to fill in the implied harmony at the keyboard, or, at any rate, mentally. The danger for the inexperienced is to imply too many chords. An examination of Bach's combinations will show his way of working in this respect. It must be remembered that a single leap usually, and a series of leaps always, implies chord repetition.

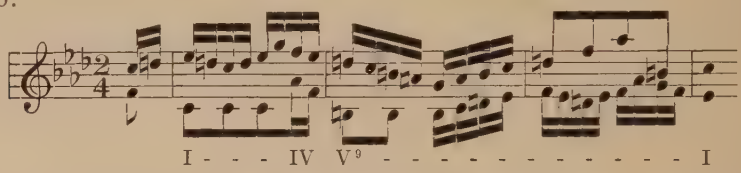
A scale line does not distinctly imply harmonies, but can be set in many ways: with a chord to each note, to every two notes, or even to more; the choice depends upon the tempo, and here instinct must help the composer. E. g. the scale of C may be harmonized



Take these sketches and fill them out, noticing that the tempo must first be chosen before the chords are selected.

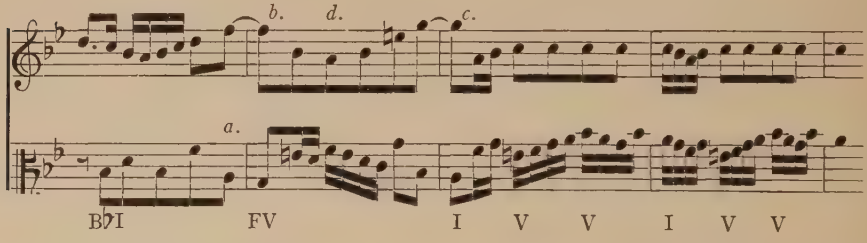
To illustrate from Bach, here are a few cases of harmonic outlines:

No. 36:



Notice that in the second bar, where passing notes are used, the accents determine the harmonies. In the third bar the chord lines also make it evident.

No. 21:

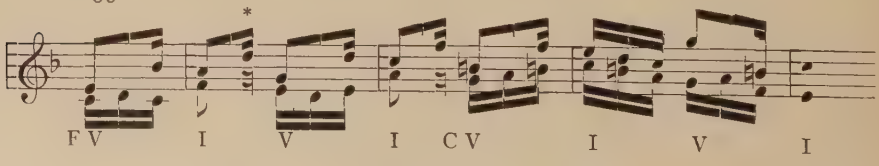


At (*a*) the A may be regarded as a passing note. At (*b*) the resolution is deferred until the third beat. At (*c*) it is deferred and then lost sight of, only being heard by implication.

Notice the repetition of harmonic plan in bars 3 and 4. At (*d*) both voices take neighbours simultaneously.

In the next we have a regular plan of two chords to a bar.

No. 35:



At (*) the note D anticipates the following chord.

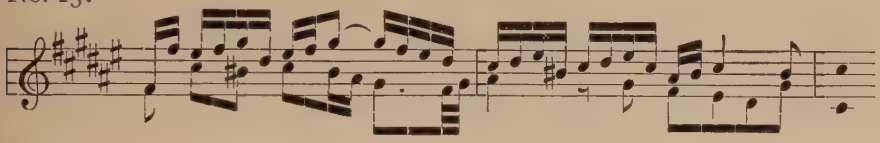
Examine many more of the answers with their countersubjects, deciding what chords are implied by the contrapuntal lines.

The third requirement, contrast, is secured by leading the two voices in contrary motion, while employing differing rhythms.

The one thing to avoid in two-part counterpoint is the appearance of merely one line duplicated. This may occur with successions of thirds or sixths. These are, however, not always to be avoided, but, when present, some rhythmic ornament should distinguish the two lines. With contrary motion, the two will necessarily appear as independent melodies.

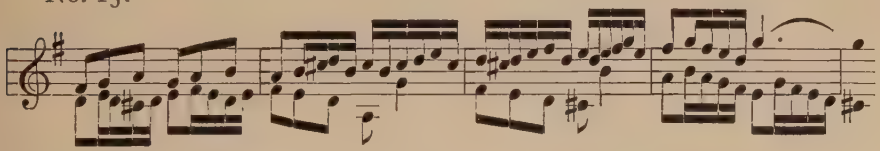
Notice the contrasted rhythm of the following:

No. 13:



and observe that the harmony is produced continuously by thirds and sixths.

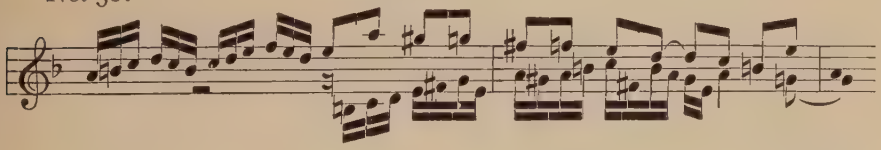
No. 15:



Here two chords in a bar are implied throughout. Observe the passing notes and neighbours, and the varied sequence in bars 2 and 3.

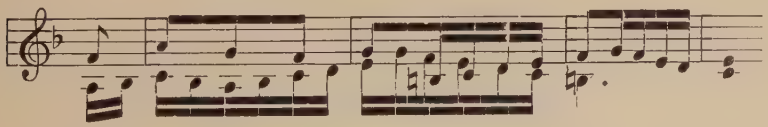
Notice the contrary motion in the following:

No. 30:



Notice also the chromatic lines, the rhythm, and the suspensions.

No. 11:



This is less satisfactory than the other illustrations, in consequence of the crossing of the two voices. The listener who has not seen the score cannot possibly follow the lines. Do not imitate it.

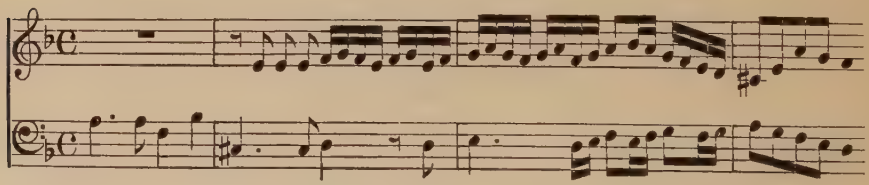
Double counterpoint at the fifteenth is written in precisely the same way as that at the octave, except that it can only be inverted at the double octave. To invert at the octave, the two voices must be kept within the limits of that interval, otherwise the transposition of the lower part up an octave, or of the upper one down the same distance, would effect no inversion. Test the illustrations just given and decide which are invertible at the octave, and which only at the fifteenth.

To be limited to inversion at only the octave somewhat confines the motion of the lines. It is usually employed in vocal fugues, where the range of the voices is limited. In instrumental fugues the inversion is more frequently at the fifteenth.

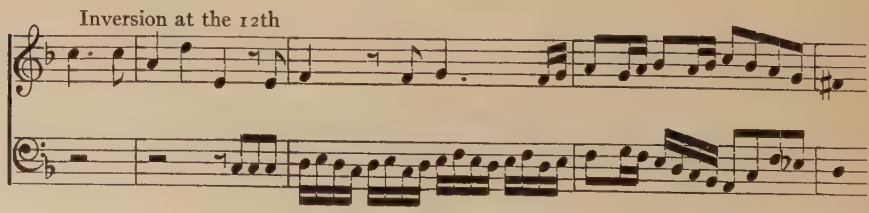
Double counterpoint at the twelfth is more rarely used than that at the octave. Nevertheless it is to be found in nine of Bach's fugues, viz., Nos. 2, 8, 13, 20, 28, 40, 41, 45, and 47; it is therefore important for the student who aims at efficiency to master it. It is less easy to write fluently, and the beginner may at first feel discouraged by his attempts, but when practice has brought skill, he will feel that his time has been well spent upon this interesting study.

Double counterpoint at the twelfth means, of course, two melodic lines capable of inversion by transposing the upper part down a twelfth, or the lower one up a twelfth. This is not merely an inversion, but gives a distinctly new character to the harmonic outline, and is a valuable source of variety. This kind of double counterpoint is, of course, also invertible at the octave.

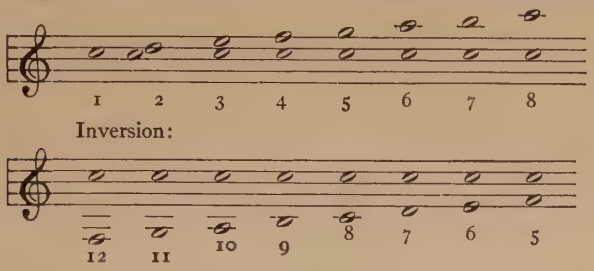
Probably the most famous piece of double counterpoint at the twelfth occurs in the opening fugue of Mozart's last work, the Requiem, which he wrote on his deathbed. Here it is:



Inversion:

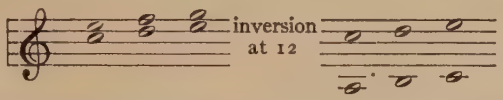


The following table of inversions should be studied and memorized:

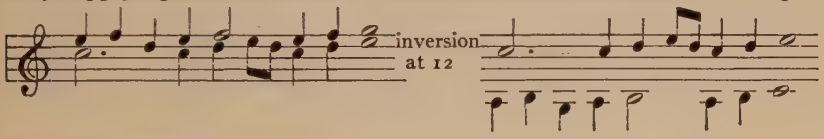


It will be noticed that the third when inverted remains a third, but the sixth becomes a seventh. These are the important points to remember. Any succession of thirds is always possible. No succession of sixths can be used.

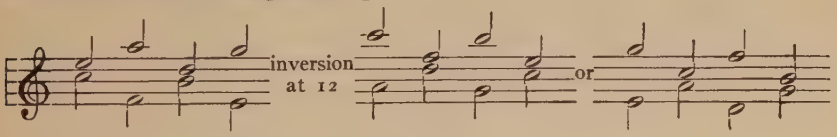
This counterpoint, therefore, consists mainly of the use of thirds. Here the problem will be how to avoid monotony. A progression like the following does not look interesting:



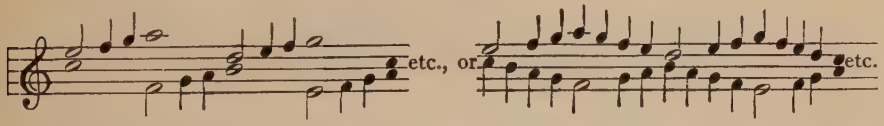
but by supplying embellishments it can be made much more effective. E. g.



The thirds need not be stepwise; e.g.

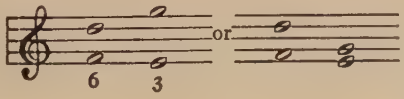


This can be embellished in many ways. E. g.

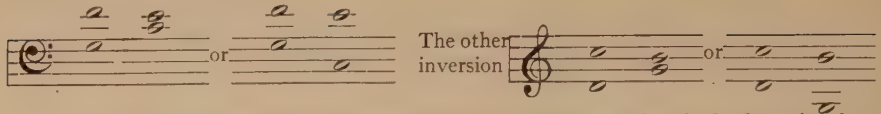


Try varying this in other ways, and write out the inversions in two positions.

The sixth should now be considered. By inversion it becomes a seventh. If, then, it is used in such a way that it will invert to a correctly used seventh it will be acceptable. It can be done thus:

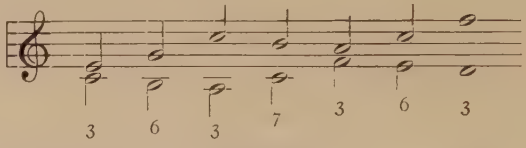


Inverted at the twelfth:



Now, with the possibility of using both the third and the sixth there is after all a good deal of variety available.

Such a progression as the following:



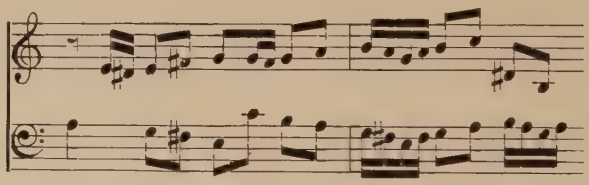
can be used with variation and embellishment.

It must always be borne in mind that all intervals introduced by step when in contrary motion are possible provided they ultimately progress to a recognized concord.

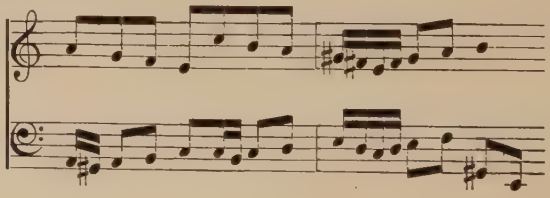
Try the above formation with its two inversions; embellish it; change the rhythm, the time signature, etc.

Illustrations from Bach:

One may be seen in Chapter 11, where Fugue No. 2 was analysed. Here is another. No. 20:



Inversion at the twelfth:



Chapter VIII

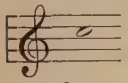
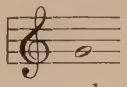
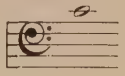
THE EXPOSITION

The exposition is the opening section of a fugue, in which each voice in turn starts its career by stating the subject or answer. These are taken alternately; subject followed by answer, answer followed by subject. In all his three-part fugues Bach follows this order; in all those in four parts he does the same, with only three exceptions, which are not to be taken as models, but may be studied as interesting deviations. They are Nos. 1, 12, and 14.

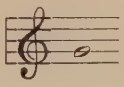
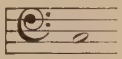
The voices may be termed, for convenience, Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass. The order in which they are employed varies.

In the twenty-seven 3-part fugues, twelve have the order: soprano, alto, bass; eleven take: alto, soprano, bass. The student should therefore decide to use one of these two plans.

It should be noticed that in the former case each voice will be separated at its start by a fifth or a fourth from its neighbour. E. g., if the soprano started on

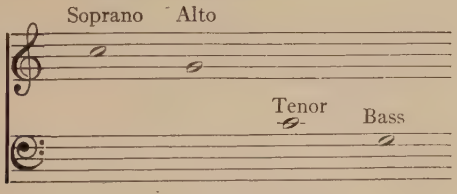
 the alto would be on  and the bass on 

In the second case, if the alto commenced on

the soprano would be on  but the bass on 

an octave below the first voice.

With four voices, the arrangement will be normal. Thus:



the voices being always a fifth or a fourth distant.

When four voices are employed the order of commencement varies greatly. The following facts should be noted: of the eighteen fugues in four parts, fourteen commence with a middle voice (alto or tenor), the other four (Nos. 5, 31, 33, and 47) commence with the bass. None of the four-part fugues commence

with the soprano. If the fugue commences with the bass, the following voices take the order: tenor, alto, soprano—never soprano, alto, tenor.

Those commencing with the tenor have two plans:

1. Tenor, alto, soprano, bass.
2. Tenor, bass, soprano, alto.

Commencing with alto we find:

1. Alto, tenor, bass, soprano.
2. Alto, soprano, bass, tenor.
3. (Only once, irregular) Alto, soprano, tenor, bass.

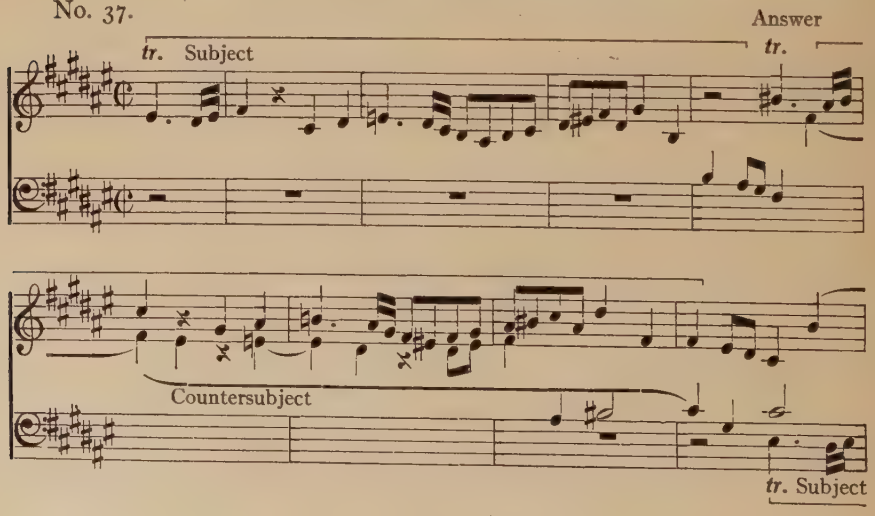
The most effective arrangement is for the last voice to be an outer one, so that it may be distinctly heard.

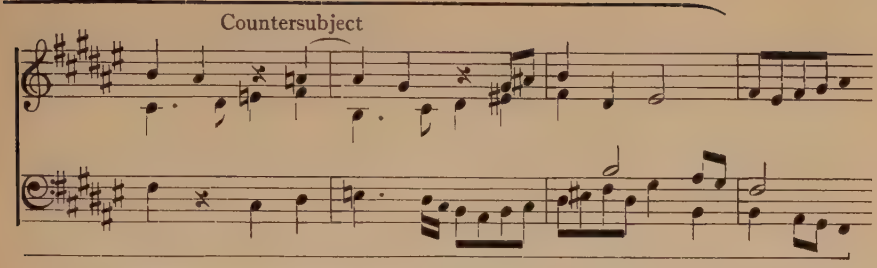
After deciding the order of voices, it should be noticed that the normal plan is for each to commence immediately after the conclusion of the statement by its predecessor. But here we frequently find that, instead of this arrangement, there is inserted an additional passage called Codetta, Interlude, or Link; which may be either a few notes, as connection, or may be considerably extended into a significant statement. These passages should be carefully studied. When used, they must appear, not as optional and unimportant material, but as an essential element in the whole composition. A codetta after the first statement of the theme is unusual, one after the second voice has given the answer is very common.

In some cases the codetta is a necessity, to avoid a conflict in tonality and to give an easy modulation between tonic and dominant. In other cases it appears to be added for the sake of enrichment by variety.

Here is an illustration of a three-part exposition with no codetta:

No. 37.



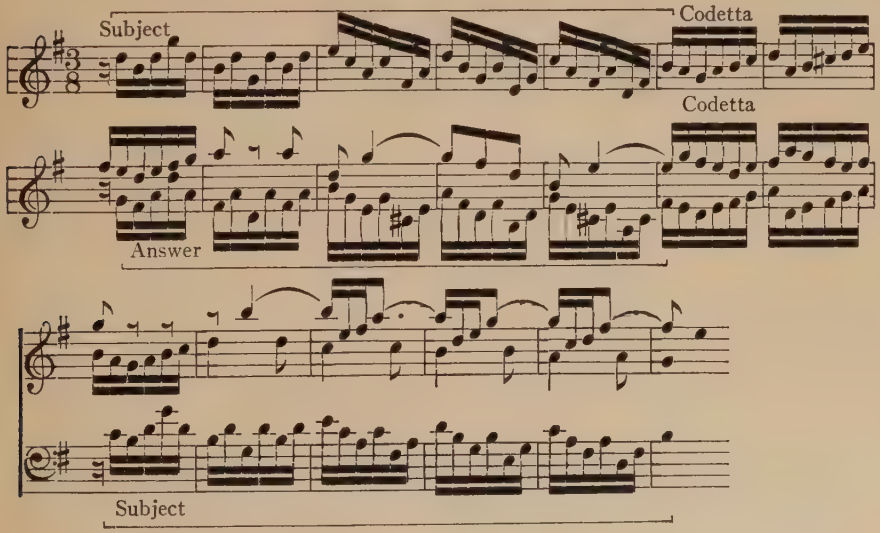


It is of interest to note that this is the one and only fugue in which the subject commences on the leading tone.

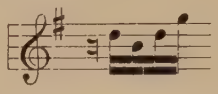
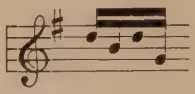
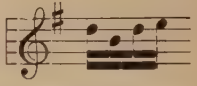
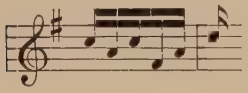
The order of voices is: alto, soprano, bass; the last being an octave below the soprano.

The answer is real. With the combination of answer and countersubject note the harmonic structure, depending on thirds and sixths, the contrast in rhythm, and the contrary motion. When the bass enters, the soprano, the last preceding voice, gives the countersubject with double-counterpoint at the octave. See how perfectly it fits when inverted. The first voice, the alto, now has a third contrapuntal line. This gives three-part counterpoint. Notice how beautifully this new line reinforces the harmony, giving in every case the missing note which makes the chord complete. Then, attend to the line itself, observe that it is a real melody, and from this learn how to write three-part counterpoint.

Only two of the three-part fugues have a codetta after the subject in the first voice; one is No. 7, already examined; the other is No. 39, with a very long subject. Here it is:

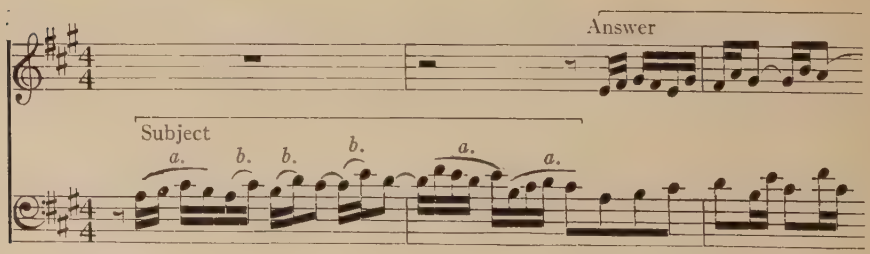


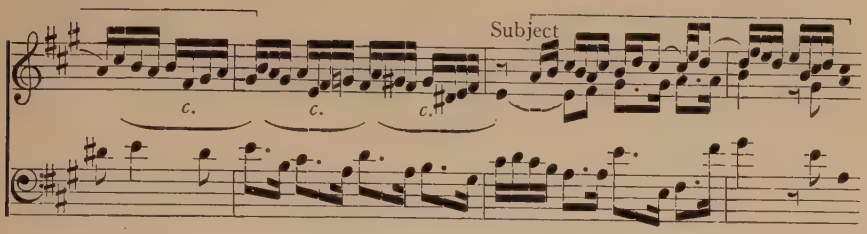
Melody may be said to be constructed of scale lines or chord lines, or of both combined. Most contrapuntal music uses the former rather than the latter, but here is a subject made up entirely of chord lines. In this respect it is almost unique. The nearest approach to a similar plan is seen in Nos. 17, 44 and 47. A glance at the other subjects will show that probably nine-tenths of the melodic material is scale line.

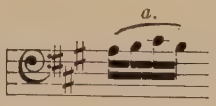
Notice the figure  varied to  by changing the leap of a fourth up to a fifth down, and then  retaining the original direction with change of interval. The following  shows a union of both forms, is reproduced in sequence three times, and so concludes the subject, showing a remarkable case of the development of a small melodic germ. At bar 6 the codetta gives a contrast by using a scale line in sequence.

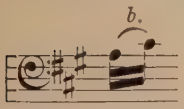
At bar 8 the answer is in the alto and is "tonal," i. e., the initial dominant is answered by the tonic and after that the melody is transposed into the dominant key. The soprano continues with a line in charming contrapuntal contrast. Notice the interval of the third, struck at every beat. This line does not represent a regular countersubject, as it is not reproduced subsequently. At bar 13 both voices give a second codetta corresponding with the first. The bass enters at bar 15 with the subject a fifth below the alto, while the two other voices continue with new lines. Study this three-part counterpoint carefully, noting the interest imparted by the contrasted rhythm, the suspensions of the soprano, and the scale line of the alto. The resolutions of the suspensions are deferred until a change of harmony occurs.

No. 43 is one of the only two three-part fugues that have the order of voices: bass, alto, soprano.

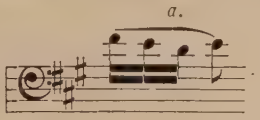


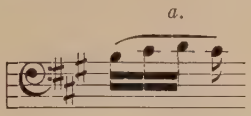


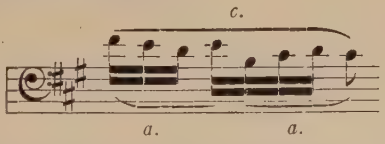
In the subject notice the initial notes 

followed by 

which is taken in sequence a step up four times, with varied rhythm, gradually climbing from the tonic to the dominant, and from thence subsiding to the mediant. The figure (*a*) is reproduced at the conclusion thus:

in contrary motion 

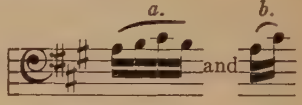
and in direct motion 

the two together forming 

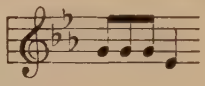
The answer is real. The accompanying bass is not a countersubject. Notice the contrasting rhythm, the harmonic thirds and sixths, and the harmony in the second half of bar 3. The E in the bass must be analysed as the neighbour of D sharp, and the harmony as the V nine in the key of E. At bar 4 the soprano gives a codetta formed of (*c*), reproduced in sequence twice, a step lower, the bass being independent. Notice the modulation in the codetta to D, then the substitution of G sharp for G natural, which latter with an exact sequence would have led to the key of C natural at the end of the bar. B sharp is expected in the bass, but B natural is given, thus suggesting doubtful tonality (not infrequent in Bach's counterpoint), which is saved by the sequential lines. At bar 5 the soprano takes the subject while the other two voices accompany with lines of somewhat less interest than the other illustrations we have studied.

The reader should now look through the whole of this fugue, No. 43. He

will see that the entire structure is derived from the material we have just examined. The figure we have called (*c*) is used continuously in an endless variety of ways, and, being derived from the subject, alternates with the subject itself throughout the composition. No other material is employed. The whole work may then be said to be derived from the germs:

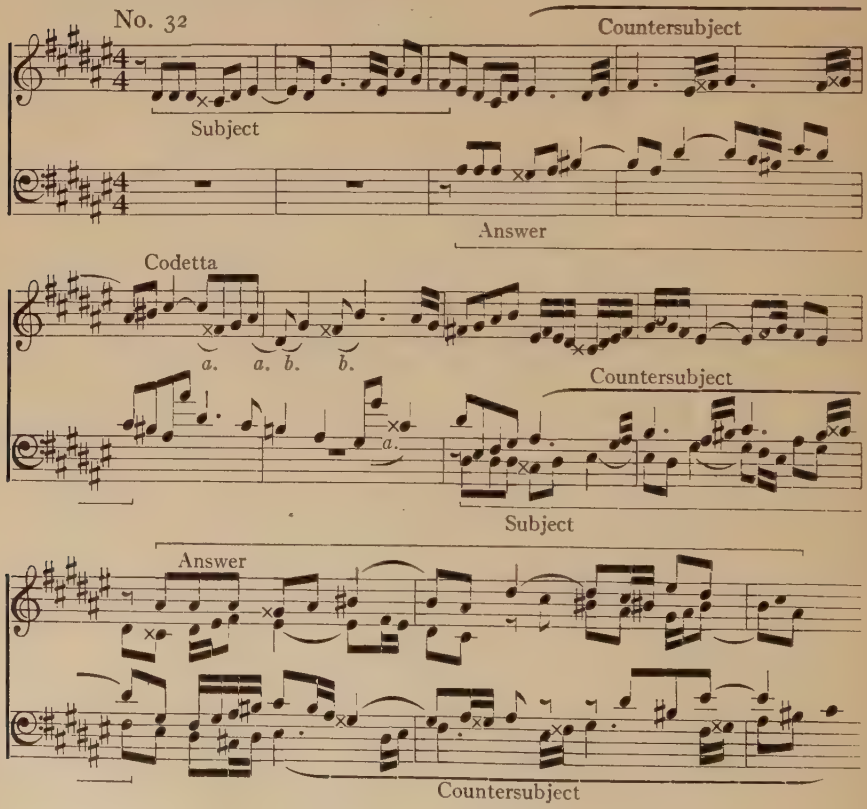


of which (*b*) may be called a variation of (*a*). There could not be a better illustration of Bach's method of working, of making much out of little, of employing the simplest material and developing it into a masterpiece by ingenuity of workmanship and variety of treatment. We are irresistibly reminded of another masterpiece by a great composer, derived from equally simple material:

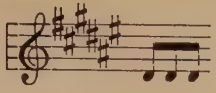


Here now is a four-part exposition:

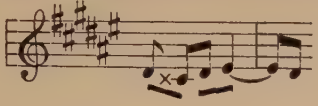
No. 32



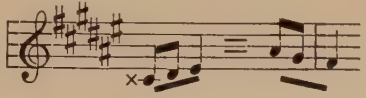
The subject commences on the tonic note, rises by gradual ascent to the dominant, and ends on the mediant. It opens by emphasising the tonic note:



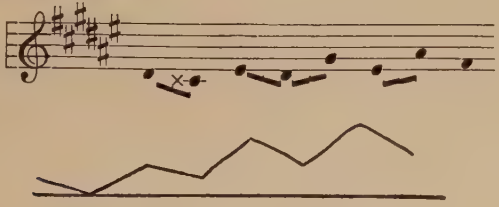
This moves a step down, and then a step up, and once more down.



The suspension seems to cause a spring up to a fourth; this again is suspended and followed by a varied sequence, after which follows the fall to the mediant, corresponding with the rise at the commencement.

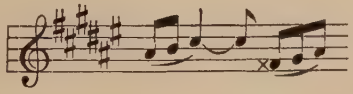


The whole might be outlined:



The order of voices is: alto, tenor, bass, soprano. There is a codetta after the second voice only.

The answer is real. The alto line in bars 3 and 4 is a regular countersubject, being employed at each appearance of the theme. Notice the suspensions, the alternation of rhythm, and the sequences. The countersubject technically commences on the third beat, the four preceding notes being a connecting link, but the hearer is conscious of no break or joint. At bar 5 the codetta is seen, an important statement, equal in length to the subject. Notice how it continues the line of the countersubject, following it by a sequence, a third lower.



At the suspended C sharp the tenor drops a fifth, answered by the soprano with the same interval, twice reproduced (figure *a*). Figure *b* is clearly taken from the subject.

At bar 7 is the bass with the subject. The countersubject is now in the tenor, while the soprano has the third line. Notice how the three-part counterpoint is written. Test it by playing the alto and bass together, then the alto and tenor, and finally all the voices. Analyse the chord formations and observe how many changes of harmony there are in a bar. At bar 9 the soprano takes the answer, with the countersubject in the bass. The two middle voices are free. Study carefully the four-part counterpoint. The four voices combine to make clear harmony. Each chord sounds satisfactory. The rhythm of each voice is distinct, without confusion or overcrowding.

The student should now analyse for himself Nos. 14, 16, 20 and 29.

The opening section, or exposition, of a fugue is understood to be complete when each voice has announced the subject or answer in the tonic or dominant key; and after it may follow the middle division, i.e., the part where the theme is taken in new keys, and perhaps with other changes. In very many fugues, however, the exposition is amplified by one or more further statements of the theme in the original keys. When several voices do this the result is usually called a "counterexposition." When one voice only gives the extra statement it is called an "extra entry." Here over definition causes confusion. The principle of the formation is the same, whether one or more voices are heard again in this way, and there is no need for using two words to express the same thing. It is interesting to notice that, out of the twenty-seven three-part fugues in this collection, six (Nos. 3, 7, 21, 35, 43, and 48) have one extra entry; four (Nos. 13, 19, 28, and 38) have two extra entries; six (Nos. 8, 9, 26, 30, 37, and 45) have three; and two (Nos. 11 and 42) have four. It is seen that two-thirds of the three-part fugues have at least one extra entry.

With regard to the four-part fugues, of the eighteen fugues, thirteen have extra entries. Nos. 5, 17, 24, 40, 46, have one; Nos. 12 and 23 have two; Nos. 2, 18, 31, 33, 41, and 47 have four. We therefore conclude that it is desirable for a four-part fugue to be written with at least one extra entry, while it is not unlikely that as many as four may be found.

The reader should now examine all these numbers, and notice how the extra entries are introduced.

Chapter IX

EPISODES

A fugue may be broadly considered as in three divisions:

1. The exposition,
2. The middle division,
3. The final section, which gives the return to the original key.

The material used throughout the fugue may be separated under two headings,

1. The statements of the subject, or theme,
2. The portions that lie between these statements.

These latter are referred to by different writers as Episodes, Codettas, Interludes, Conjunctions, Links. These terms, while meant to help, are sometimes confusing to the beginner. They should all be classified mentally as "episodic material." The episodic material occurring in the exposition is usually called "codetta," that occurring later is called "episode." When, however, this is very short it is again referred to as "codetta."

As a matter of fact, all this material is constructed in the same spirit, and, while intimately connected with the theme itself, is used for linking together its various statements.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the episodic development. It is that part of a fugue which gives most scope for the display of the composer's originality, ingenuity, and efficiency. It may be compared with the development division of a sonata, and indeed there is no better preparation for the writing of sonata work than the diligent study of fugal episode.

On examining Bach's episodes, we see that they may be developed from:

1. A figure from the subject,
2. A figure from the countersubject,
3. A figure from the incidental counterpoint,
4. New material.

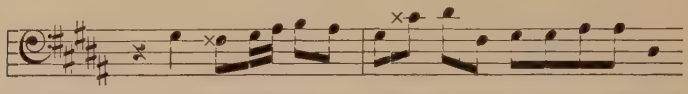
The selected figure may be used in sequences, at various intervals. These may, and frequently do, modulate. It may be used in imitation, which, the reader will realize, differs from sequence by the fact that in the former the material is reproduced by the same voice while in the latter another voice takes it up.

When several episodes are written unity is secured by the use of the same material while variety is manifested by never using this material twice in

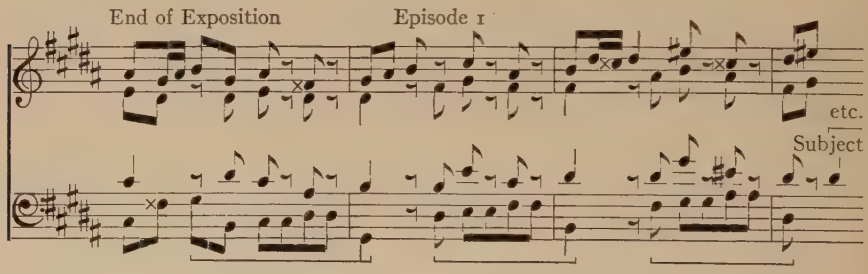
the same manner. With a large number of episodes, as a rule not more than three appear with precisely the same material, here again to avoid monotony.

The length of an episode varies greatly. When a very long one is written it subdivides into sections, with a change in material, or a change in the manner of presenting the same material. Several cases occur in the fugues we are studying where an episode is constructed in triple counterpoint, with the various inversions displayed.

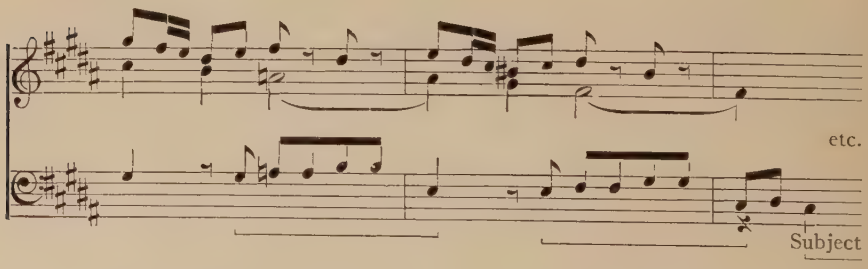
To illustrate, Fugue 18. The subject is as follows:



Episode 1 takes the last two beats of the subject in the bass with the accompanying voices and shifts the whole group up a third, in sequence, then does this again, producing modulation through G sharp minor, B, and D sharp minor. Notice we have here a perfect cadence, twice reproduced.



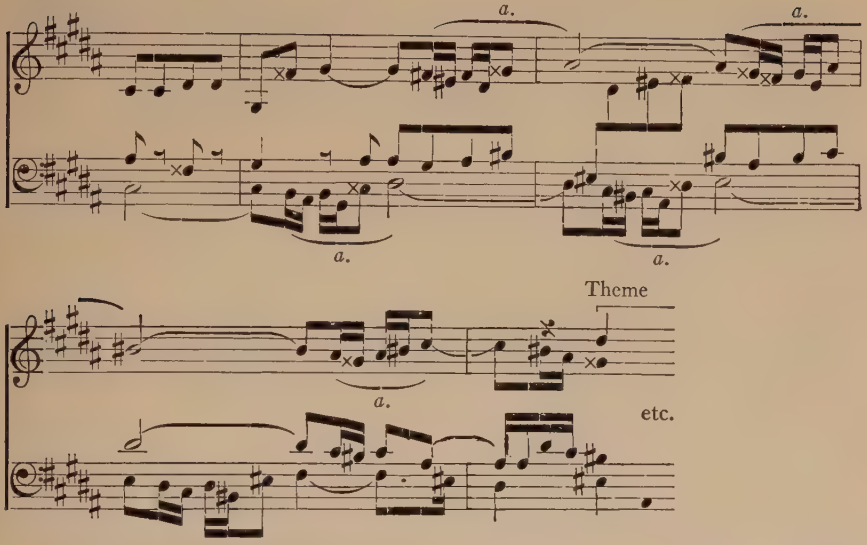
Episode 2.



Here we have the same material used in the bass with only three voices and given in a more interesting way than in episode 1. The sequence now descends a third.

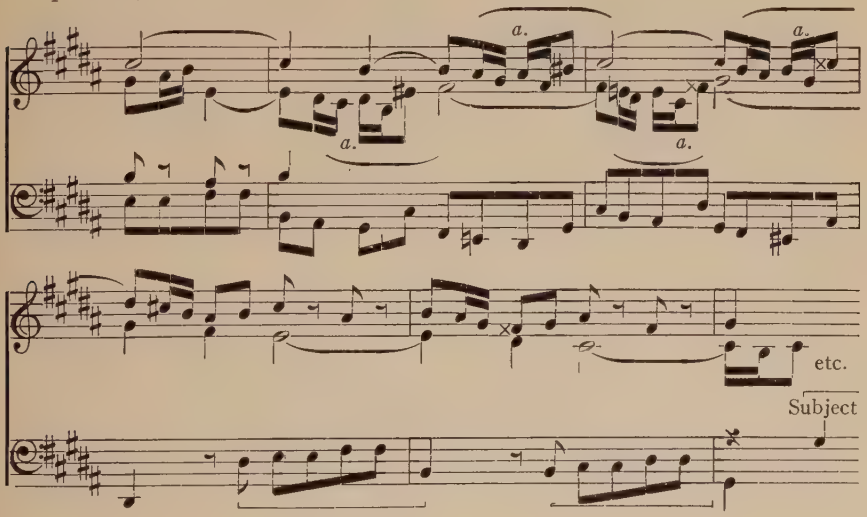
Three more episodes follow. Two are constructed from new material while the last returns to the original.

Episode 3.



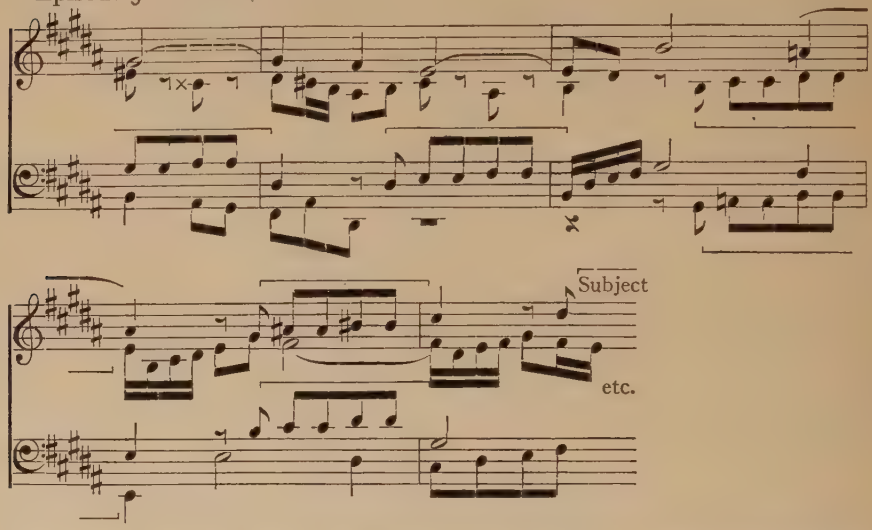
Here we have imitation at the fifth between the bass and the alto, while the tenor helps out with a free part. Figure (*a*) is new material, growing naturally out of what has preceded. The imitation is canonic, and is reproduced in sequence three times. At the end of the third bar the figures are varied, or rounded off, so as to lead naturally into the statement of the theme. Notice this carefully; it is a very common device.

Episode 4.



Here the alto and soprano use the figure taken by the bass and alto in episode 3. They are a third higher, otherwise the lines are identical. The bass now gives a free part, rather more interesting than the tenor of episode 3. This episode, it will be noticed, is twice as long as episode 3. It subdivides into two sections. This second division is identical with episode 2, taken a fourth lower, so we have, after all, episode 1 reproduced twice.

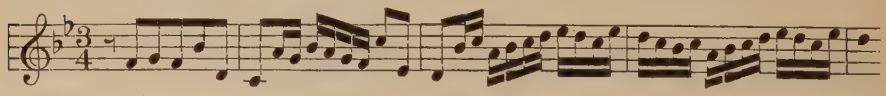
Episode 5 is more elaborate.



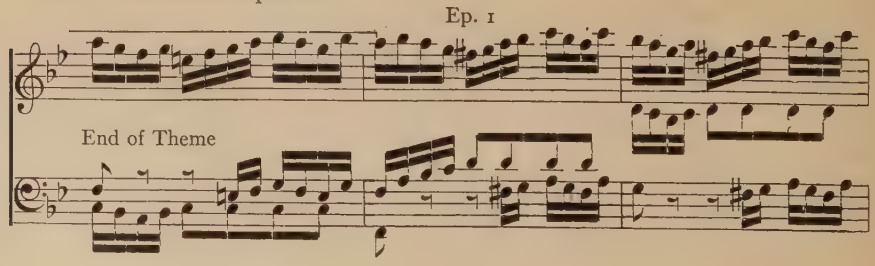
Here the last figure of the subject is again employed in the tenor, answered by the alto and bass in thirds, with these again answered by the same inverted, in the tenor and soprano, with other lines reproduced from episode 2, now used in double counterpoint at the tenth and twelfth.

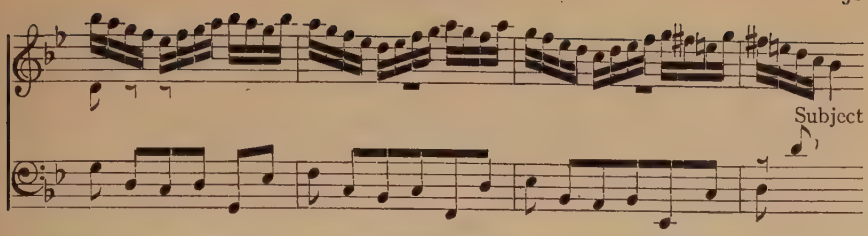
Fugue 21 has two episodes only, which illustrate some other points.

Subject:



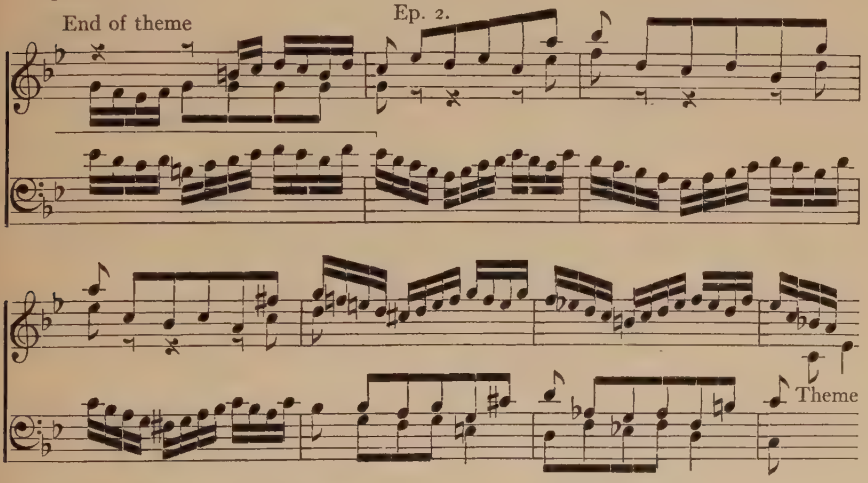
End of theme and episode 1:



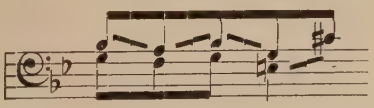


Here the last bar of the subject is taken with its accompanying counterpoints inverted. This is repeated, then a new device succeeds. The first bar of the subject is taken in bass by contrary motion while the soprano continues its last bar; i.e. we have the first half of the subject combined with the second. This is reproduced in sequence three times down one step, joining on to the next statement of the theme. Notice the slight change in the first bar to make the joint fit in smoothly, and also the chromatic alteration in the last bar.

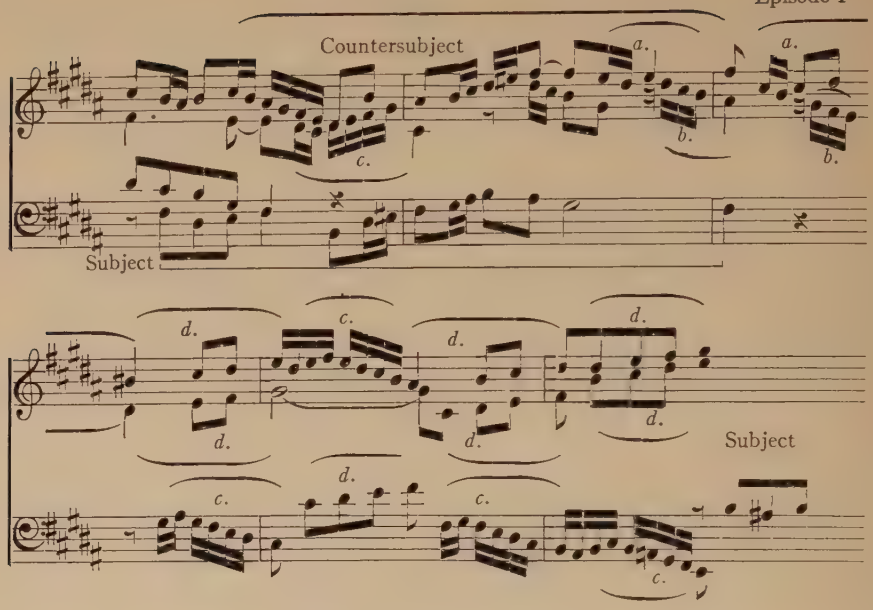
Episode 2.



This abandons the material used at the beginning of episode 1, but employs that of its second section, inverted at the octave, transposed a third, and reproduced in sequence, as before. This is succeeded by a new development. The flowing line now appears in the soprano, and is used twice in sequence. Below it the alto and bass give the first figure of the subject between them, thus:

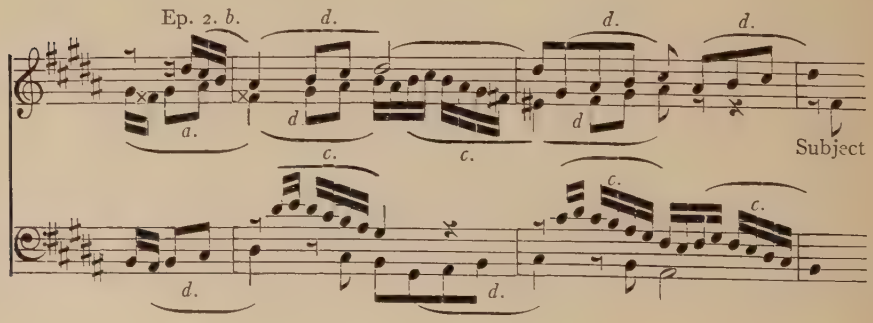


Now turn to fugue 23. Here is the end of the exposition, followed by episode 1:



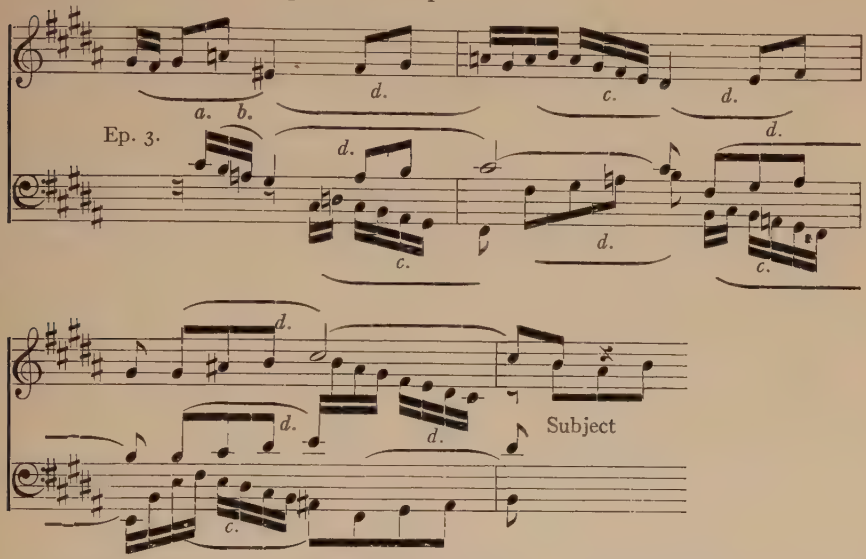
In the third bar figure (*a*) is a development of figure (*a*) in the preceding bar. Figure (*b*) is similarly from (*b*). Then the bass starts figure (*c*). This is the contrary motion of the last two beats of the alto of bar 1. The soprano and alto have figure (*d*) in sixths. This is figure (*b*) taken by augmentation and in contrary motion. The next two beats give the soprano and bass inverted at the twelfth. The construction formed by these combined figures now starts in sequence at bar 4½, but only the first two beats are taken, and these are reproduced in sequence up and down. This leads to a statement of the subject in the tenor.

Then follows episode 2.



Here the soprano and alto take the same two lines as in episode 1, but inverted. The tenor has the original bass, while the bass now adds a fourth line, using figure (*d*).

Episode 3 is to be compared with episode 1.



Here is reproduced the material of episode 1. Notice how the leap down in the soprano of a fourth, instead of a third, results in shifting the whole formation down one step, leading to the subdominant key. In the third bar the bass leaps up an octave to keep within reasonable limits. The soprano changes A natural to A sharp, thus producing modulation, by substitution, to the tonic key. Study these details carefully.

A whole volume might be filled with the examination of other examples. All the fugues are interesting, and no two are constructed in the same way. Certain general principles, however, are clearly shewn. When there are several episodes, they are all intimately connected, though no two are precisely alike. They are constructed of material already heard, or are suggested by it. Each, as it succeeds, tends to be more interesting than the preceding one. The figures used are short and easily recognized, and they are invariably corroborated, *i.e.* reproduced in sequence, by imitation, or by contrary motion.

The reader may now turn to fugues 43, 7, 35, and 3, and carefully analyse their episodes for himself.

Chapter X

TRIPLE COUNTERPOINT

The device of triple counterpoint is used in seventeen of Bach's 48 fugues, viz. 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 33, 37, 38, 39, 41, 45. It is therefore an important element in Bach's contrapuntal work, and should be carefully and diligently studied by the young composer.

As double counterpoint is the combination of two lines capable of effective inversion, so triple counterpoint consists of three lines similarly written. But here the difficulty of achieving a satisfactory result is obviously greater, since all three lines must be capable of being placed in any position, with a result perfectly satisfactory from a harmonic standpoint.

No contrapuntist can be considered efficient who is unable to write in this manner with ease, the reader is therefore advised to persevere until he has mastered it. Let him not be alarmed at the apparent difficulty, for, to quote Cherubini, "everything can be accomplished by diligent labour, joined with a flexible organization."

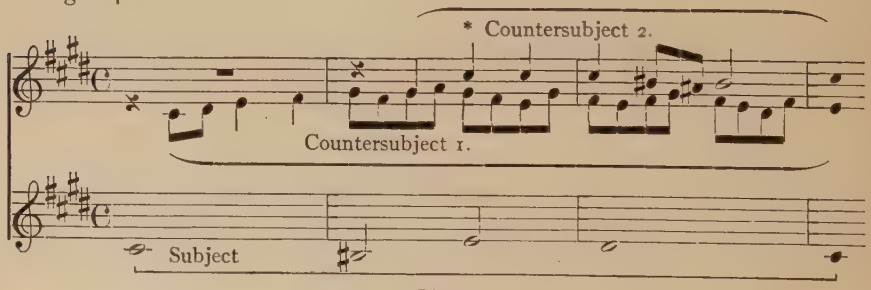
There are two ways in which Bach uses this formation:

1. When the subject is heard with two countersubjects (as in Fugue No. 2, already studied).
2. When the triple counterpoint is used incidentally for the episodes.

The first is well illustrated by fugues 4 and 18; the second is seen in fugues 17, 37, and 41.

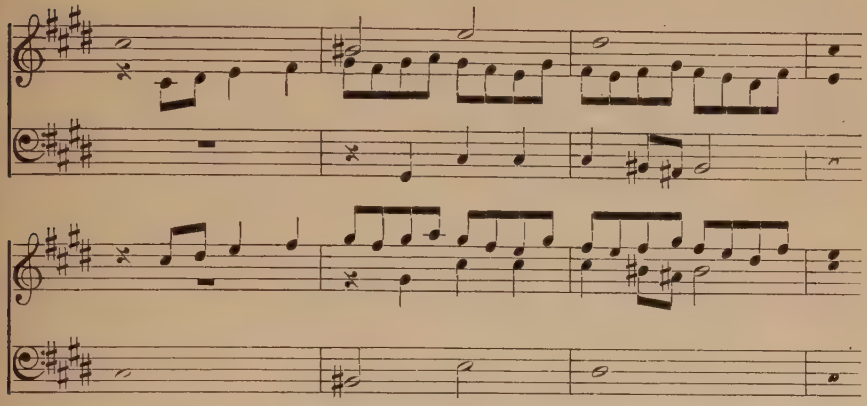
To produce triple counterpoint it is necessary to commence and end on an incomplete triad (fifth omitted), and, when using a chord fifth between these two points, to take it in such a way that, when inverted, it will present a correctly used 6/4 (i.e. either stepwise or in chord line). The result will be that each melodic line will be in double counterpoint at the octave with both the others.

Fugue 4.

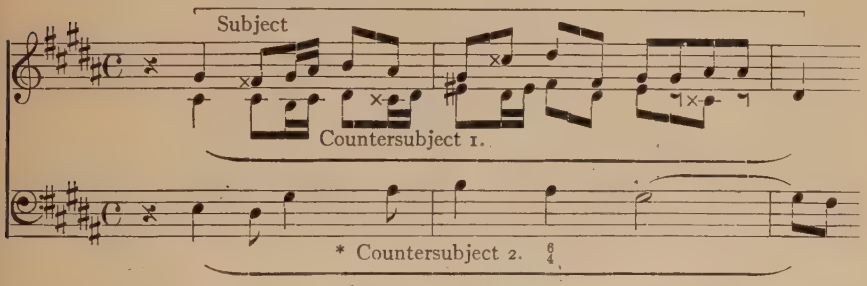


Notice here the striking contrast in rhythm and in outline. At * there is a chord fifth used; it moves down to the third, so fulfilling the condition of its use.

The inversions are as follows:

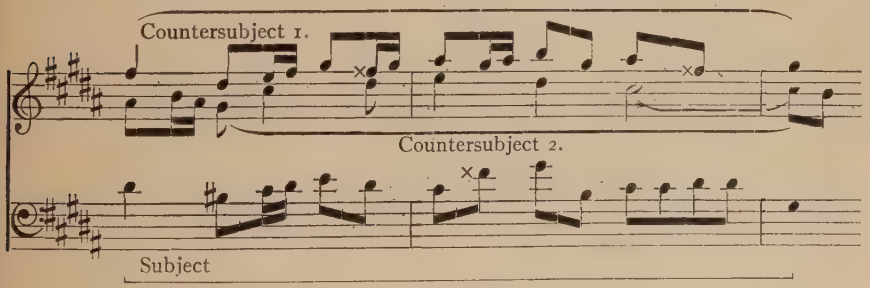


In fugue 18 we have these three lines:

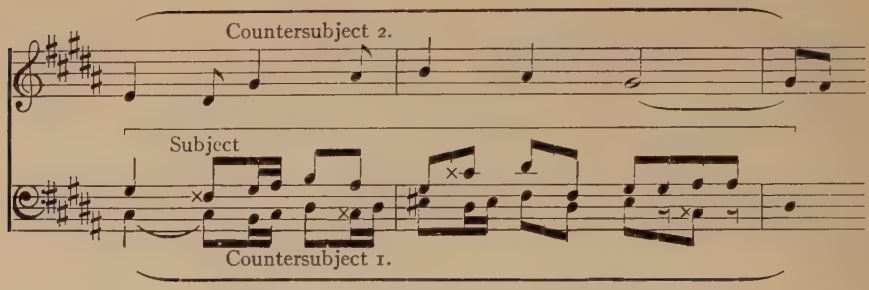


Notice at * a complete triad, which, when inverted, will give a six-four, and in the following bar a six-four correctly used.

Bach gives the following inversions at bars 11 to 13 of the fugue:



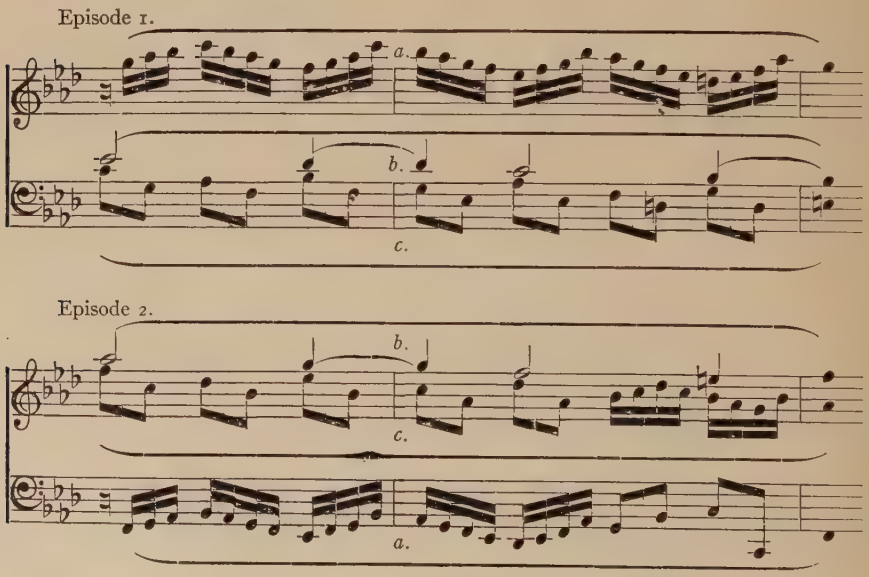
He does not use the other inversion, but it is here inserted to shew the satisfactory effect.



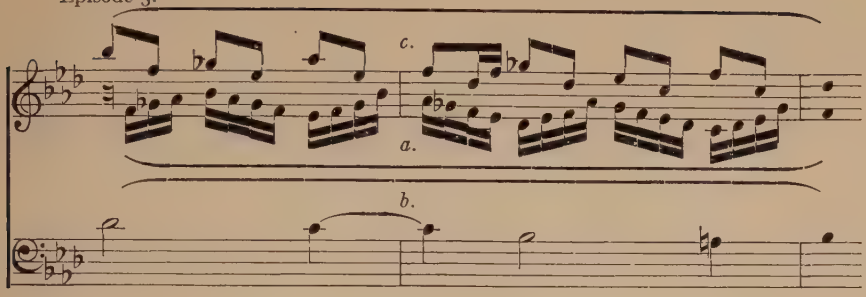
Fugues 17 and 41 are both in A flat, and for four voices. It is a curious coincidence that in each of them Bach constructs his episodes in the same manner, as passages in triple counterpoint. In No. 17 episode 1 occupies two bars. It is restated in one inversion as episode 2, and then again in the other inversion as episode 3.

On the other hand, in No. 41 episode 1 consists of a bar and a half of triple counterpoint, with an inversion stated immediately. In episode 3 the same passage is used as its second section, the triple counterpoint being given three times successively, each time with a new inversion.

No. 17



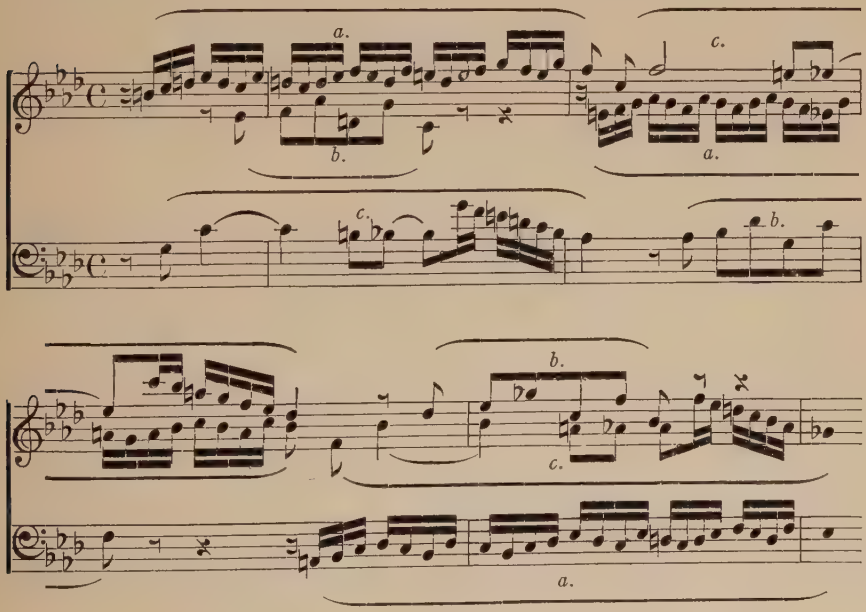
Episode 3.



A reference to the fugue itself will shew that these three lines are each developed from a figure of the subject, and of the accompanying counterpoint. It will be noticed that the whole passage is a sequence three times at a step down. In episode 2 a change is made at the end to introduce a cadence in F minor.

Another remarkable feature is that in episode 2 line (*a*) is taken, not by inversion at the octave, but at the twelfth. Episode 3 has the usual inversion at the octave.

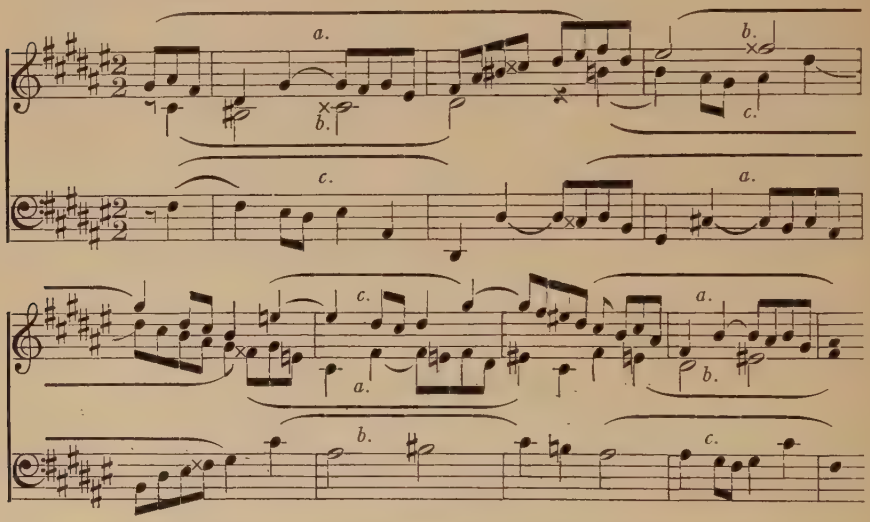
Fugue 41, episode 2. A reference to the original will shew how this passage fits in with its surroundings, and how it compares with episode 1.



This is perhaps the most interesting piece of triple counterpoint we have yet examined. Notice that line (*a*) has an ascending sequence. It is derived from a figure of the codetta, bar 5. Line (*b*) is suggested by the subject; line (*c*), by the countersubject. Each of them takes its individual course, not following the sequence of line (*a*).

The whole passage modulates through C minor, F minor, and B flat minor to E flat minor. Observe the skill with which the joints are effected.

Our last example, No. 37, is less elaborate. The triple counterpoint is quite a short statement. It is given four times in succession in episode 1, and then is reproduced, again four times, in episode 3. A glance at the fugue will shew that the remaining episodes are constructed from other material, in a different manner.



Line (*a*) is suggested by the subject; the other lines are new material, flowing easily out of what precedes. It will be noted that a good deal of freedom is used to effect the joints between the four statements. The fourth one has the same placing as the first. Notice the modulation, D sharp minor, G sharp minor, C sharp major, F sharp major.

The student should now practice the writing of triple counterpoint himself. Follow this plan: write a short melodic statement, or take any subject or countersubject already written. Then add first one and then another counterpoint to it, each in double counterpoint at the octave, against the original line and against each other. Test the result by writing out three times with lines (*a*), (*b*) and (c) used alternately as bass.

Chapter XI

THE COMPLETE FUGUE

In the Well Tempered Clavier we have 48 Fugues, and it will be seen that in no two is the form exactly the same. It is therefore difficult, in consequence of this diversity, to lay down rules and to give directions, as to the whole structure of a fugue.

There are some points, however, upon which we may be sure.

1. Every fugue commences with an exposition.
2. Every fugue ends with a return to the subject, stated one or more times in the original key.
3. All have a middle division.

It is chiefly in this latter part that diversity is seen.

What keys shall be taken? How many times shall the theme be stated? How many episodes shall there be? and what shall be their character?

This second division is called by some writers the "modulatory section." Rules have been given by various writers as to what these modulations shall be. But, when these rules are compared with the practice of Bach, much discrepancy is seen to present itself. Cherubini directs that, in a major fugue, the modulations shall be to

the dominant,
the relative,
the subdominant,
the supertonic,
the mediant,
the dominant, returning to the tonic.

For a minor fugue, to the

relative,
the dominant, minor,
the submediant,
the subdominant,
the dominant of the relative (key of the lowered seventh step), and back to the tonic.

These are, of course, the next related keys (i.e. those having the same signature as the tonic, or else one accidental more or less).

In very few cases does Bach go beyond these keys for the statements of the theme; but in no case does he completely follow Cherubini's arrangement. It may therefore be suggested that it is usually best, even in a modern fugue, to keep the statements of the theme within the keys named. The episodes

may modulate to any extent consistently with good taste. Upon this point the reader should study the Bach models, and note the order of keys. One point should be observed: between modulations to various keys, there is frequently a return to the original tonic in this middle division, giving the effect of an oscillation between the various tonal centres, balancing upon the original key.

Here are a few of Bach's plans in major:

Fugue 7, in E flat, for three voices.

After the exposition, theme in C minor,
theme in C minor,
theme in G minor.

Final section, theme in E flat,
theme in E flat and B flat,
theme in E flat.

Here there are three announcements of the theme, two in the relative minor one in the mediant.

Fugue in F sharp, No. 13, in three parts.

The theme is used altogether eight times, as follows:

F sharp: C sharp: F sharp: F sharp: C sharp: D sharp minor: B: F sharp.

Here are only two new keys, the mediant and the subdominant.

Fugue in C, No. 25, for three voices.

Theme use eight times, keys:

C: G: C: D minor: D minor to A minor: C to G: C: C to G.

Here the new keys are supertonic and relative.

In fugue 4, in A flat, for four voices, the theme is used fifteen times, as follows:

A flat: E flat: A flat: E flat: A flat: A flat to E flat: A flat: A flat: F minor: E flat minor: B flat minor: D flat: A flat: D flat: A flat.

Here the new keys are: relative, dominant *minor*, supertonic, subdominant, and subdominant minor. This is the only case where Bach uses the dominant minor.

A few illustrations for minor fugues.

Fugue in E minor, No. 34, for three voices.

Theme used nine times. Keys:

E minor: B minor: E minor: G: D: B minor: E minor: A minor: E minor.

Here is the relative and its dominant, and later on the subdominant.

Fugue in A minor, No. 44, for three voices.

Theme used eight times. Keys:

A minor: E minor: A minor: C: E minor: A minor: D minor: A minor.

Compare this with the preceding. We have again the relative key in the middle division, with the subdominant before the final tonic.

The reader should now turn to the Bach volume and make out a further list of key successions. He will find that, of the twenty-four fugues in major keys, the first new key used after the exposition is the relative in eighteen fugues, while four have the supertonic and two the subdominant. In the

twenty-four minor fugues, the first new key after the exposition is the relative in twelve fugues, in five it is the subdominant.

The number of times the theme is used in the middle division varies greatly. In fugue No. 39 there are only six entries, in fugue No. 20 there are forty, and between these two extremes there are endless gradations.

Now, how shall the student work? The most famous writer of Symphonies now living was asked, in the course of an interview, how he first learnt to write a symphony. "I will tell you," he replied, "I selected one of Mozart's great symphonies, took some large M.S. music paper, and copied out the whole, note for note, leaving a blank space on the paper underneath Mozart's music. Then into this space I proceeded to write a symphony of my own, following all the details of the master's workmanship as nearly as possible, in regard to formal design and methods of construction. This somewhat mechanical plan gave me more insight into the mysteries of symphony writing than any amount of ordinary studying and thinking could have done, and that is how I learnt to do my work."

No one has ever suggested that any lack of originality can be detected in the works of the eminent composer here referred to; but it may be suggested in passing that in this case, as in so many others, originality is shewn by merely being natural; and that it is a quality which, if not latent in the individual, cannot be acquired by effort.

Now there is no better way of learning to write a fugue than to follow the plan of this symphony writer. Let us therefore take one of the smaller of Bach's fugues, and, after giving it minute examination, endeavour to cast another, of our own, in the same mould.

Here is Vol. II, No. 19. (The exposition has been already examined in these pages, p. 41).

This fugue, in A, 4/4 time, is for three voices, and fills 29 bars.

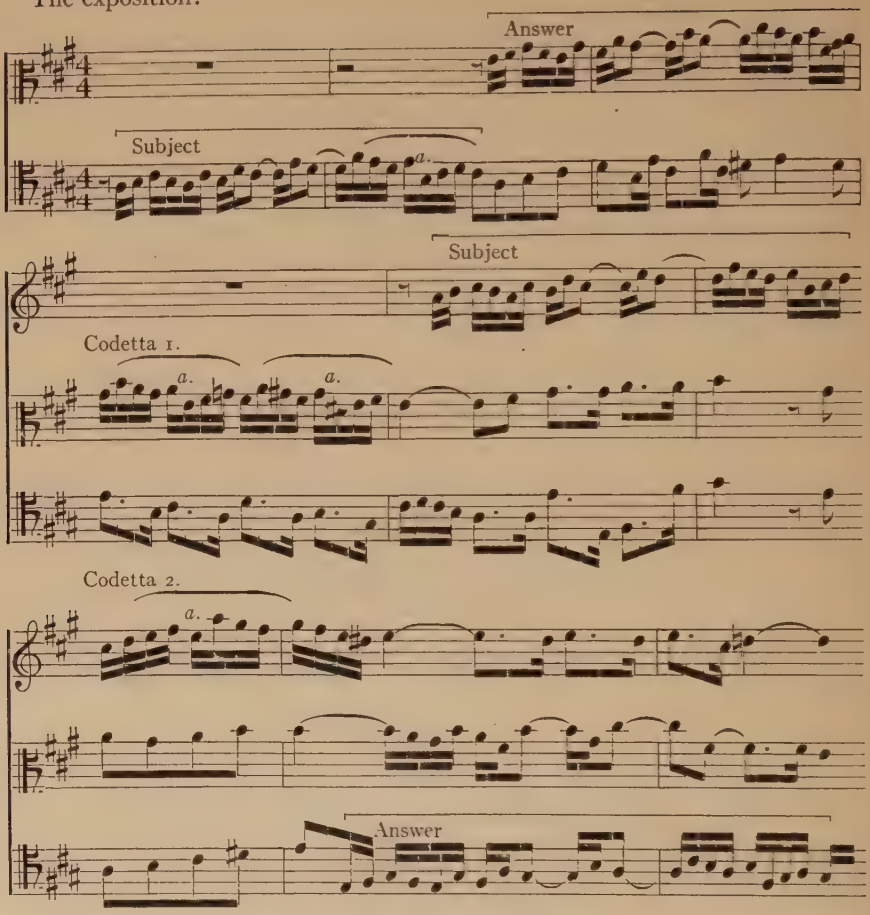
The theme, a bar and a half, is used ten times; four times in the exposition, including an extra entry of the answer in the first voice (tenor).

It is used twice in the middle section, in the relative and the mediant; and four times in the final section; in the tonic, the subdominant, the dominant, and the tonic.

The remainder of the fugue is constructed from figure (*a*)—the last two beats of the subject—which is used 36 times. There is no regular counter-subject.

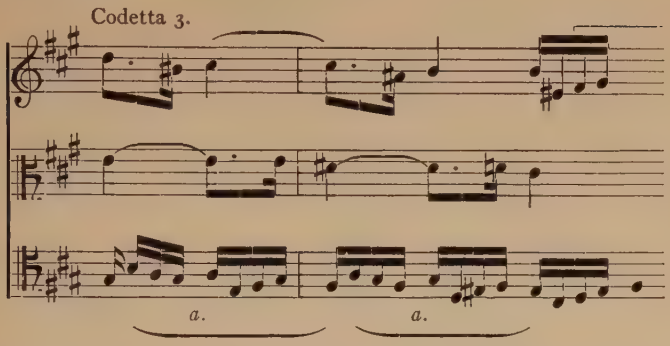
The plan is as follows:

The exposition:

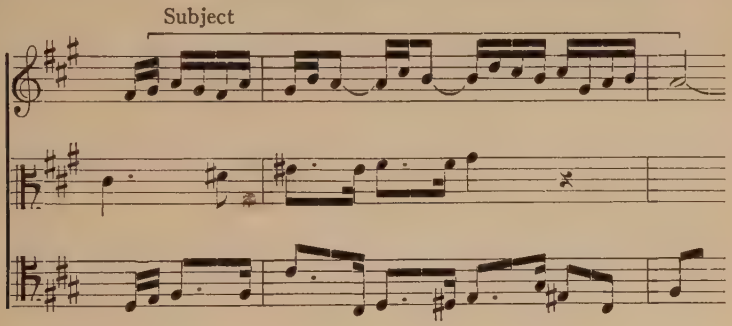


Here we see the order of voices—tenor, alto, soprano. The counterpoint under the answer is free, not being employed as a regular countersubject. Notice the beautiful construction in contrast of rhythm and harmonic combination. At bar 3 codetta 1 is a sequence of figure (*a*)—the last figure of the subject—one step down twice over, the counterpoint against it introducing a new rhythm (♩. ♪), which is constantly used from here onwards. At bar 5 the subject is announced by the soprano, with the two other voices giving new counterpoints. At bar 6½ is codetta 2, figure (*a*) in contrary motion, again in soprano. This codetta modulates easily to E, with the answer appearing for the first time in a lower voice. Examine the two accompanying counterpoints, new lines with alternating rhythm. The exposition is finished at bar 7, third beat, and then follows:

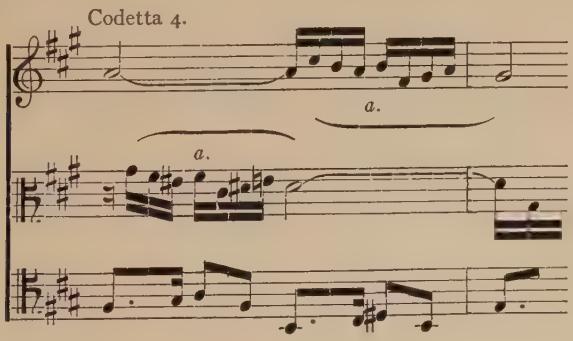
Codetta 3, opening the middle section.



This is a sequence of the first two beats of bar 8, all three lines transposed a step down, modulating to F sharp minor, in which key appears:

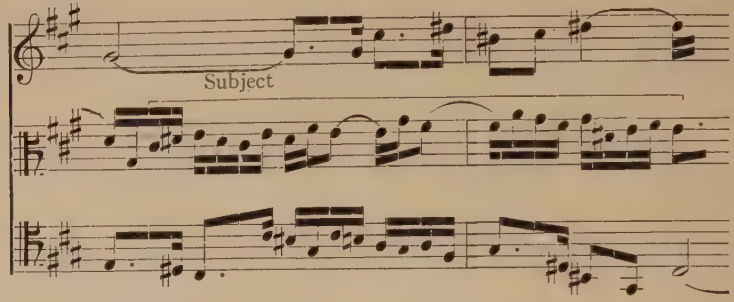


Then follows codetta 4:



One bar in length. Here figure (*a*) in alto imitates the soprano at the fourth, while the suspended half-notes give a counterpoint supplemented by a bass line, making three part counterpoint.

Now follows the theme in C sharp minor, in the alto, accompanied by new and interesting counterpoints in the two other voices.



This is succeeded by episode 1.

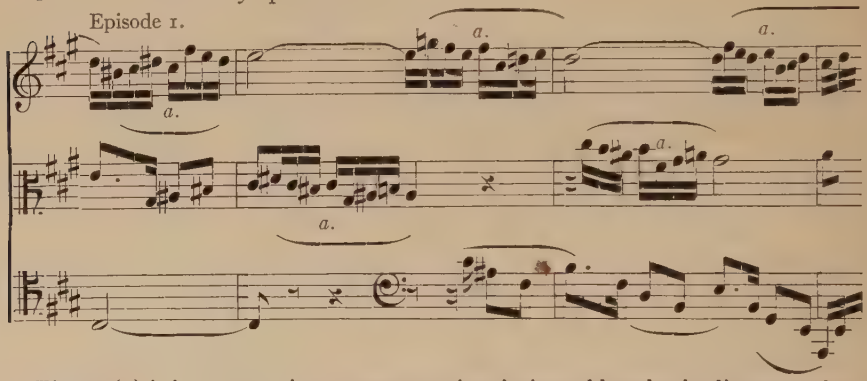
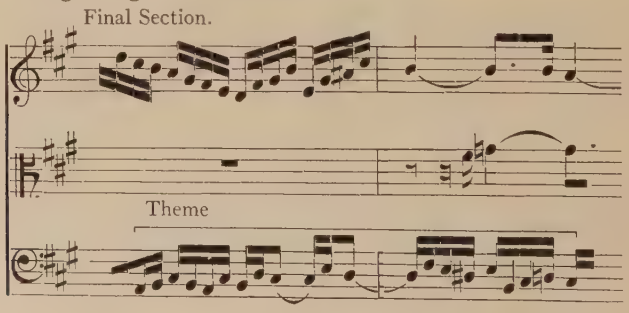


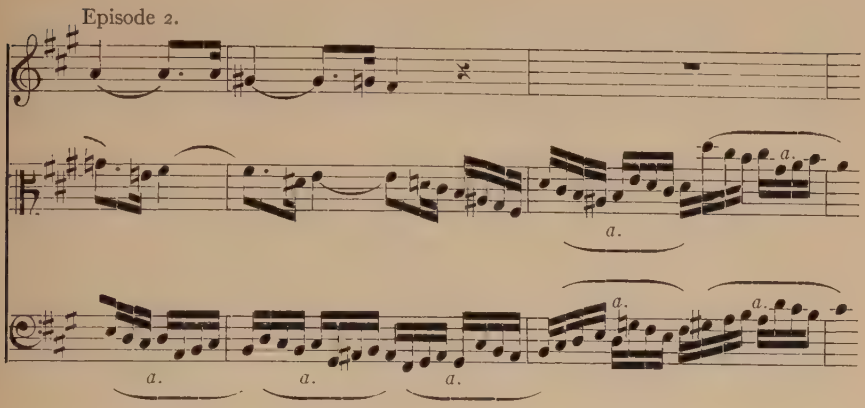
Figure (*a*) is in soprano in contrary motion, imitated by alto in direct motion. Then follow three more statements of figure (*a*) between soprano and alto, imitating at the fourth, again with the same syncopation as in codetta 4, while the bass accompanies each with a new counterpoint. (Note that this division is called an episode, as being of more importance than a codetta, but the method of working is the same in both cases).

We now have the theme in the bass, in the original tonic key. This may be defined as the beginning of the final section.



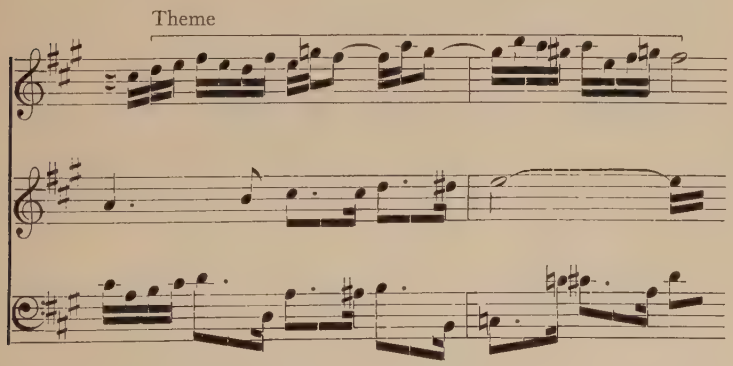
Observe the new counterpoint in the soprano.

Then comes episode 2.

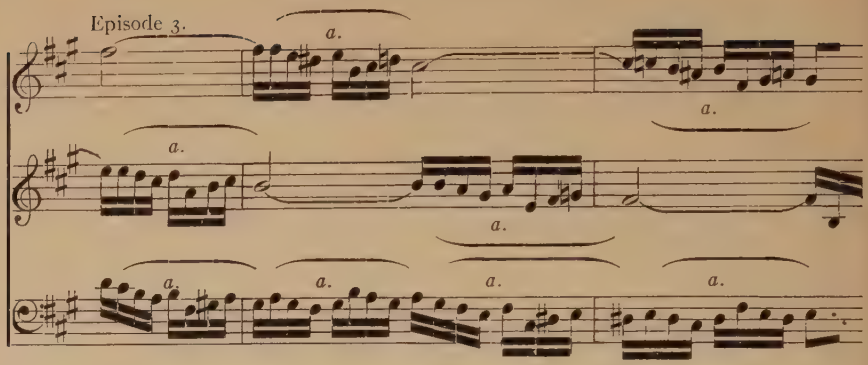


Here the last two beats of bar 15 are twice reproduced in sequence in all three voices, modulating through D, C sharp minor and B minor. Then the bass states figure (*a*) in contrary motion, three times in sequence, in the key of B minor, rising a fifth to the key of A. Over this the alto takes (*a*) in direct motion, the first time altered. Examine this combination carefully.

This leads to the theme in D (the subdominant).

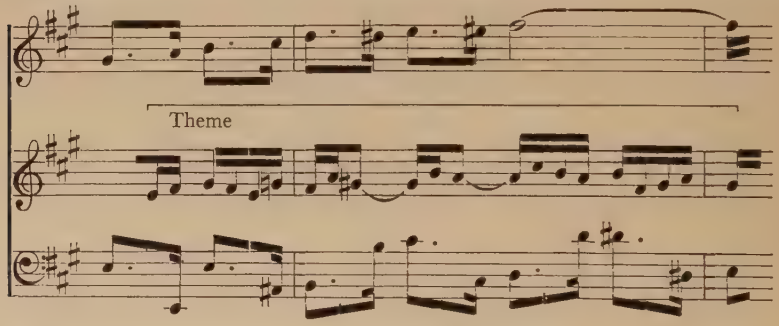


The accompanying counterpoint gives new chromatic harmony, and leads to episode 3.

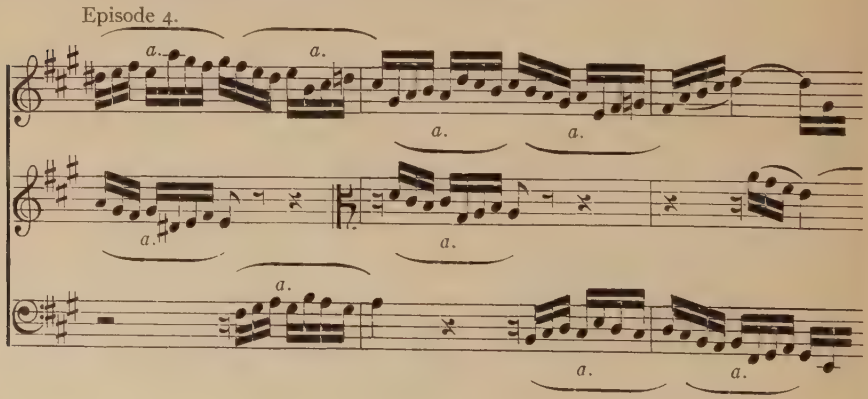


A new combination of figure (*a*), with the alto and bass in thirds answered by the soprano and bass in sixths. This whole bar is reproduced in sequence at the lower fourth. Notice that one statement of figure (*a*) is varied, and that the modulation passes through A and E, with chromatic harmonies.

We now near the end. Here is the theme in E (the dominant) in the alto:

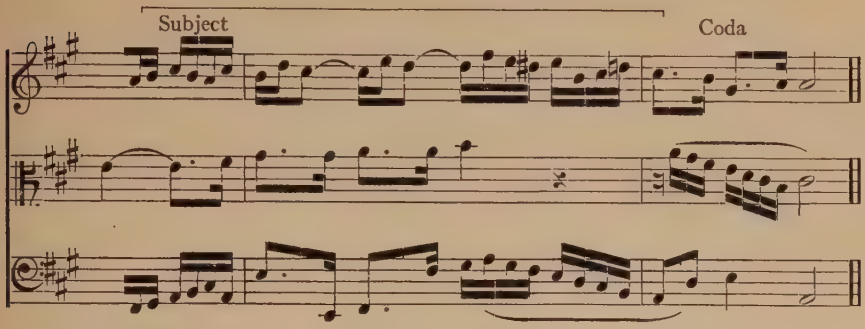


Compare the accompanying counterpoints with those of bar 20. This leads to the last, and perhaps the most interesting, episode:



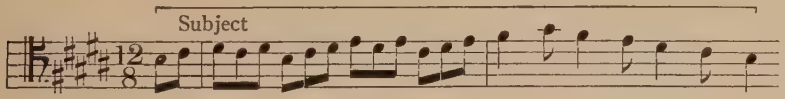
The soprano and alto give figure (*a*) in contrary and direct motion simultaneously. This is inverted by the soprano and bass, followed by the whole restated in sequence a fifth lower, and continued by the bass with figure (*a*) in bar 27, while the soprano and alto present new and ingenious counterpoints.

We now see the final statement of the theme in the tonic key:

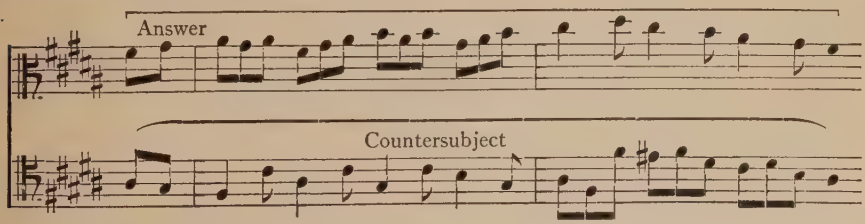


Observe that the last figure in bass is imitated in the alto at the octave, leading to the final cadence through an extension sometimes called "Coda."

Let us now, with the analysis of this fugue before us, endeavour to write one on the same general lines, following the order of entries in the exposition, the plan of the middle section, the key successions, the number and size of the episodes, etc., remaining at liberty to vary the details of workmanship where desired. Take another key (B major), and another time signature (12/8), and try this subject:



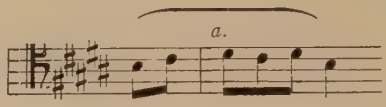
It starts on the tonic note and rises to the dominant, as does Bach's, but in other respects it differs, starting on a different beat, and occupying two bars instead of one and a half. The next thing is to give the answer, which will be real; and write a counterpoint to it.



In this particular Bach example there is no regular countersubject; but as in so many others there is one, we will follow his example in other cases, and decide

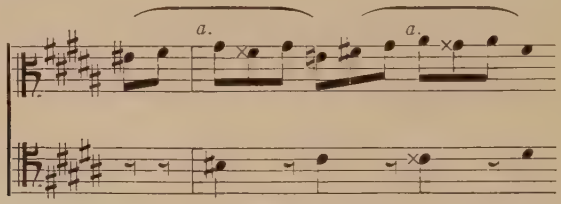
to regard this counterpoint as a countersubject, after testing it by inversion at the octave.

Now a codetta of one bar is due. Of what shall it be constructed? In the Bach model the last figure of the subject was utilised. On testing the subject before us, however, it appears that here the first figure of the subject is more suitable for working in sequence, imitation, etc. We will therefore decide to use it:



calling it figure (*a*), and will employ no other material for all the episodic work of the fugue.

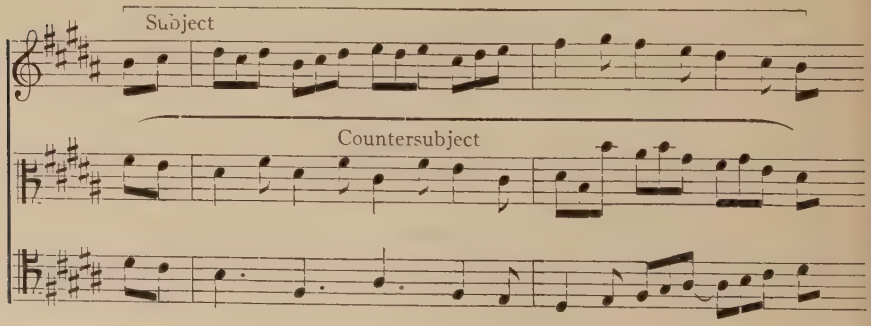
Here is codetta 1:



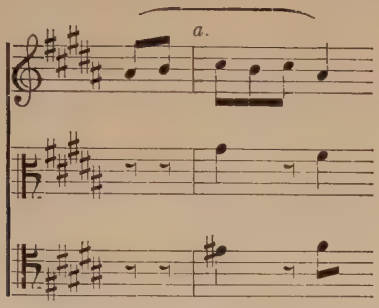
using figure (*a*) in the alto, with the bass giving a free part. This is taken in sequence, but *rising* a second, whereas that in the Bach model falls. This choice is made in order to fit in with the next statement of the theme.

Notice in passing that a sequence may be used freely in either direction and at any interval. Now test this codetta by omitting the accidentals, and observe that they are optional substitutes, giving colour to an otherwise rather bald statement.

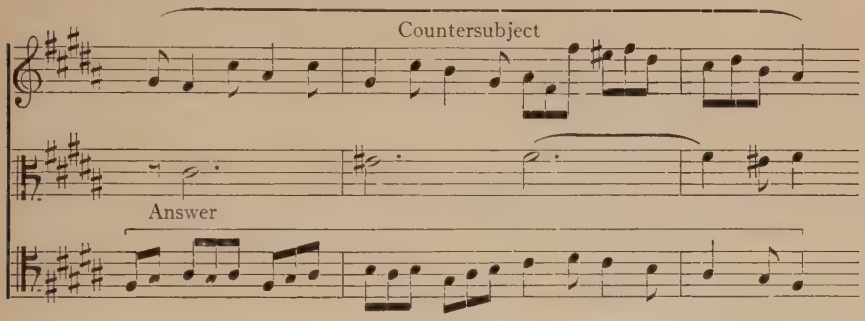
Next follows the third voice (soprano) with the subject; while the countersubject is in alto and a free line in tenor.



Codetta 2, of half a bar, is due, with figure (*a*) in the soprano. Here it is:

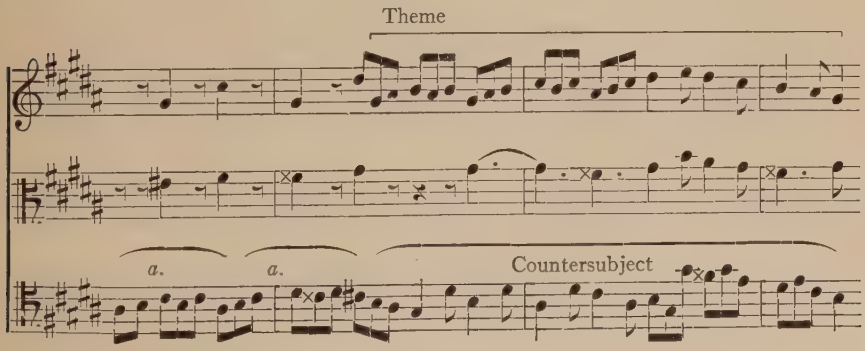


a fragment reproduced from codetta 1. Now follows the answer in tenor, the countersubject in soprano, and a free counterpoint in alto.

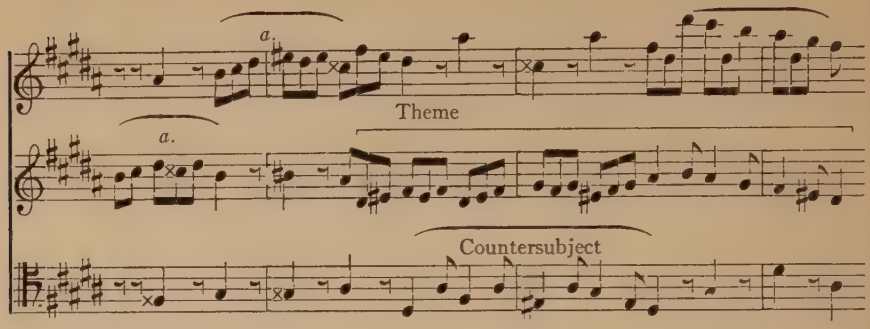


This latter is very simple, as a more complicated line would have given a confused effect.

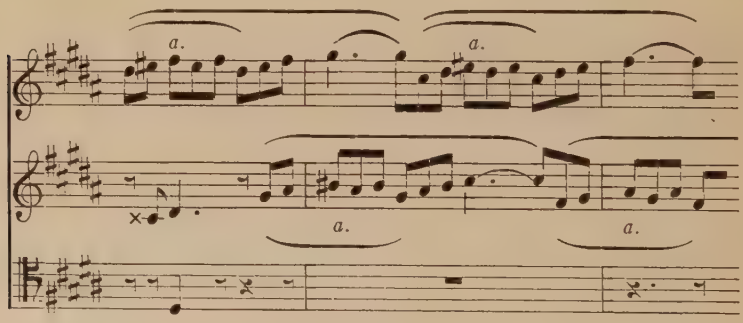
The exposition is over. We commence the middle section with codetta 3, one bar, leading to the theme in the relative (G sharp minor). Here we may use figure (*a*) in the bass, in rising sequence.



Now follows in the model codetta 4, figure (*a*) in alto imitated by soprano, leading to the theme in the mediant. How will this do?

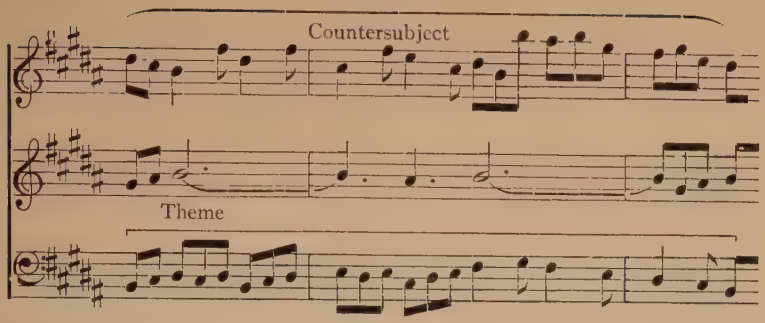


Notice the modulation in the codetta, and observe the soprano part at the appearance of the subject. The countersubject commences in the tenor, and then, as is done by Bach in other places, it is transferred freely to, and finished by, the soprano, giving variety and new interest. Our model now asks for episode 1, two and a half bars, a more important statement than the codettas. It has figure (*a*) treated five times. We will do something different. Here is figure (*a*) in soprano, imitated at the fourth by the alto, but the first voice continues its line, and so forms a canonic device, which leads, just in time, to the tonic key for the next event.



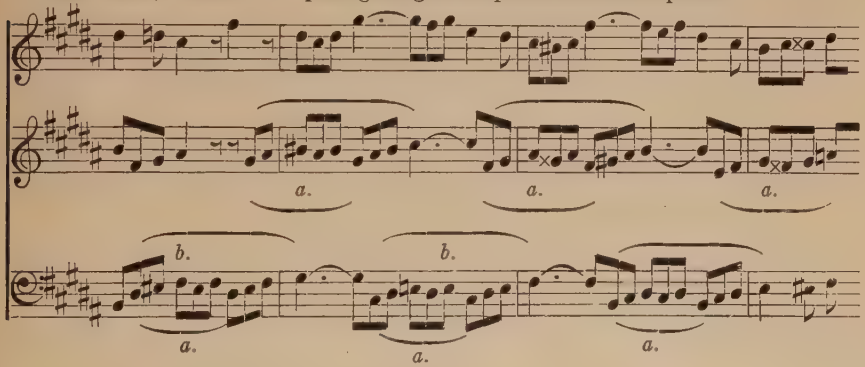
This is only two bars instead of two and a half, and we have omitted the bass part, in order to make the entry of the subject that follows more emphatic.

Now comes the final section, with the entry of the subject in the tonic key:

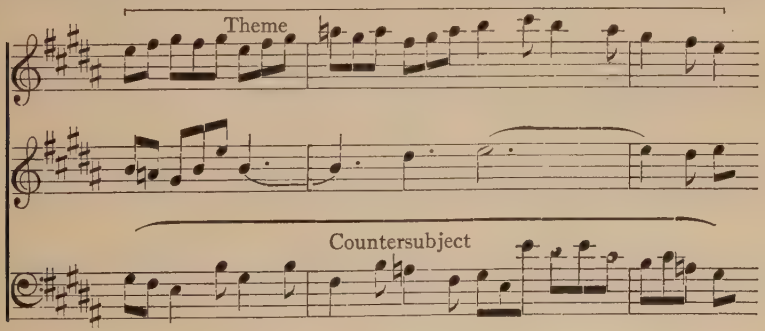


Here the subject is in the bass, the countersubject in soprano, with the alto free.

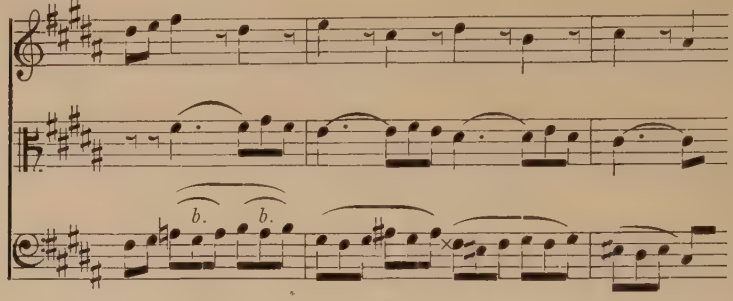
Next the model has episode 2, two and a half bars, with figure (*a*) used seven times in contrary motion, leading to the subdominant key. We need not follow this plan slavishly. Episode 2 went so well with the canon that we decided to present it again, in a new guise. Let the canon be inverted and taken by the bass and tenor, with a third part giving an important counterpoint. Here it is:



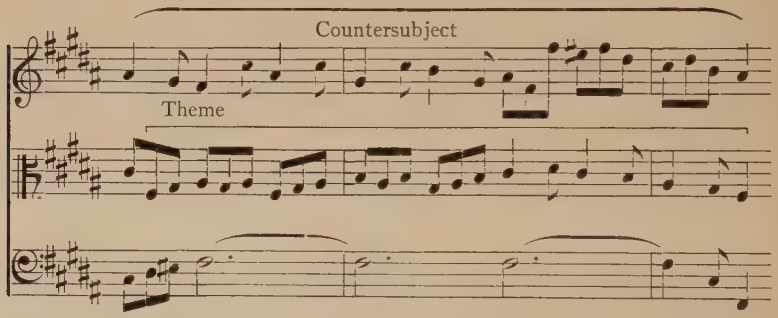
We have now led to the subdominant, and are ready for the theme taken by the soprano in that key, with the countersubject in bass and a free part in alto.



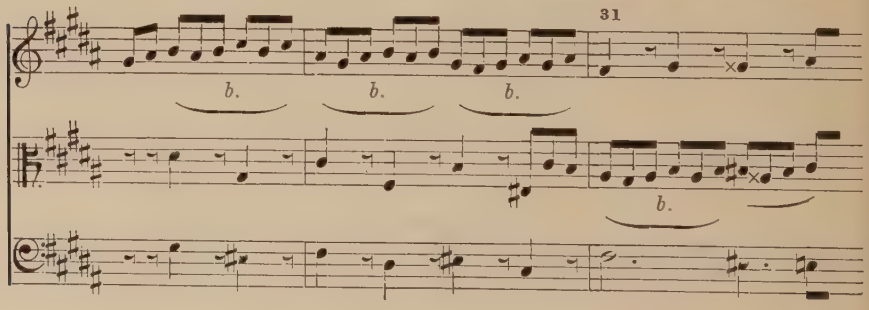
Now follows episode 3, two bars. The model has eight statements of figure (*a*) in various manners. We will give something new here, and use only a portion of figure (*a*), calling it figure (*b*), in sequence, leading through the keys of E, G sharp minor, to F sharp.



Here two statements of figure (*b*) in rising sequence are reproduced in sequence a step lower, with the alto giving a counterpoint derived from this formation. Now follows the alto with the theme in the dominant key (F sharp), with the countersubject in soprano and an organ point in bass.

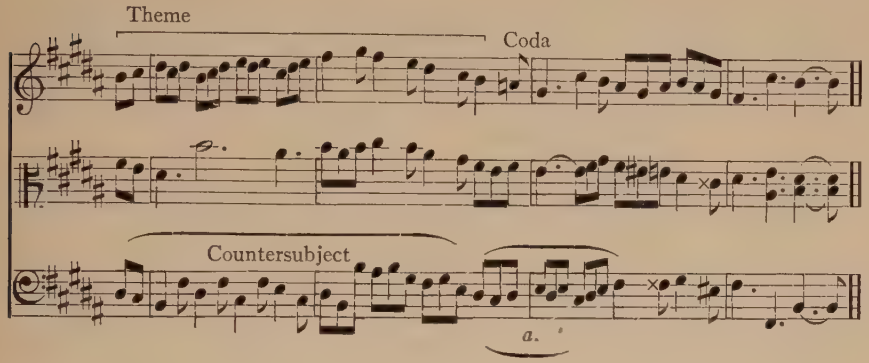


Episode 4 in the model has two and a half bars. Let us fill the same space with a new version of episode 3, the soprano taking figure (*b*) for two bars in descending sequence, followed by the tenor with the same in rising sequence.

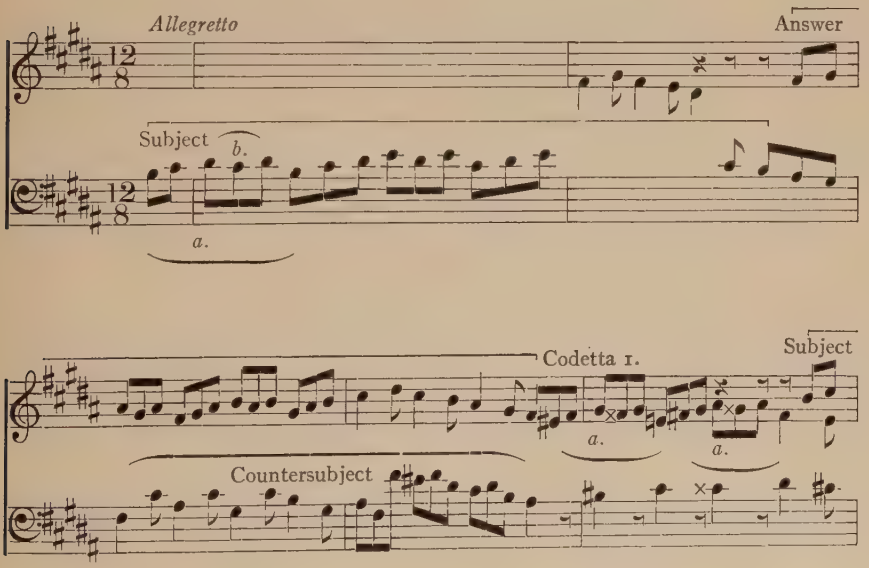


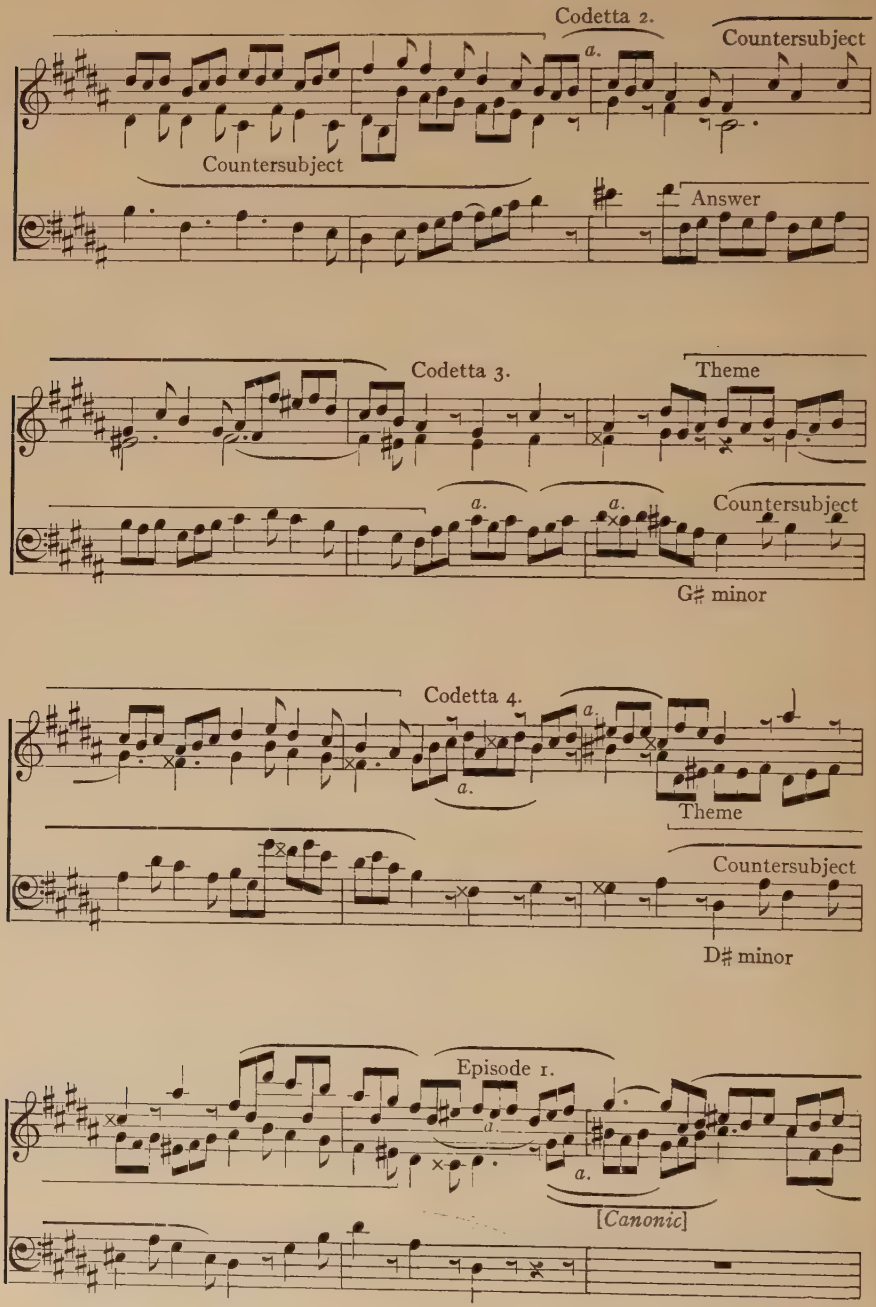
Notice the chromatic harmony in bar 31, produced by the contrapuntal lines.

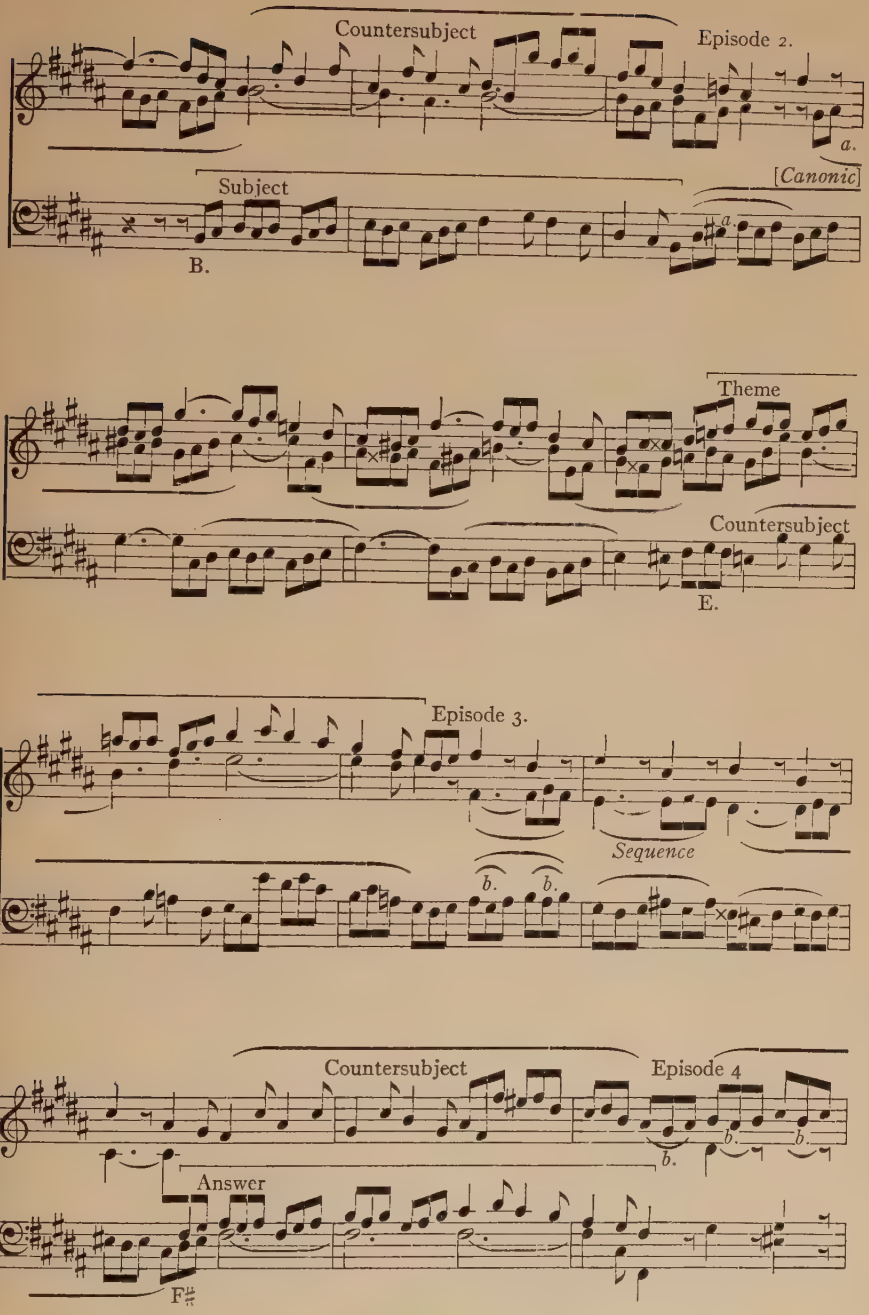
We now arrive at the final statement of the theme by the soprano, in the tonic key, followed, in the model, by the Coda of one bar. The length of this latter is optional, and in our case we may extend it to two bars, in order to give a satisfactory "rounding off."

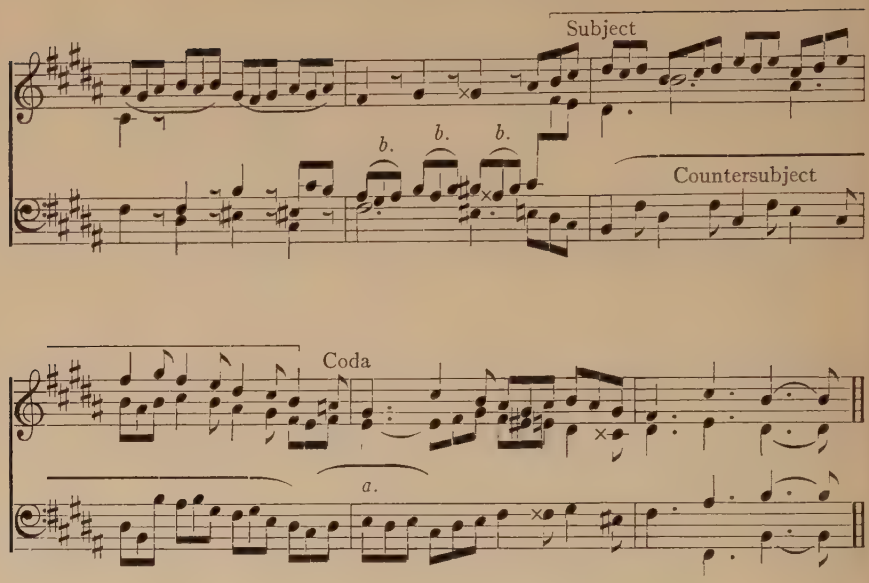


It may now be advisable to put these fragments together, to shew the complete fugue. For the convenience of those unaccustomed to reading the proper clefs it is given in short score.




Codetta 2.
Countersubject
Countersubject
Answer
Codetta 3.
Theme
Countersubject
G♯ minor
Codetta 4.
Theme
Countersubject
D♯ minor
Episode 1.
[Canonic]


Countersubject
Episode 2.
a.
[Canonic]
Subject
B.
Theme
Countersubject
E.
Episode 3.
Sequence
b.
b.
Countersubject
Episode 4
b.
b.
b.
Answer
F♯


Subject
b.
b.
b.
Countersubject
Coda
a.

Chapter XII

FUGUE WITH SPECIAL DESIGN

The fugue given in the last chapter presents the subject in its original form with no changes beyond its transposition into new keys. Interest can be increased by the use of special devices; by taking the theme in contrary motion, in diminution, or in augmentation, in two of these together, and by stretto, in an endless variety of ways. Space forbids the dealing fully with all these devices in the present volume. It may be noted, however, that Bach uses augmentation in three fugues (Nos. 8, 26, and 27), diminution in two (Nos. 27 and 33), contrary motion in twelve (Nos. 6, 8, 14, 15, 20, 23, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, and 46), stretto in nineteen (Nos. 41, 4, 48, 16, 24, 22, 15, 31, 11, 30, 26, 6, 29, 27, 1, 46, 33, 8, and 20). All these should be examined by the reader.

Here we will make a special study of No. 33, which contains numerous stretti, with contrary motion, diminution, both these together, and a varied version of the theme.

An analysis of this fugue follows, which the student can work out with the Bach volume before him.

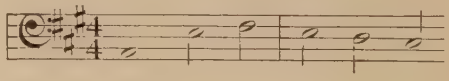
Fugue 33.

bar 1. Subject in bass.
bar 2. Answer in tenor (notice, here again, that perhaps Bach felt the subject to fill three small bars, rather than one and a half large ones) with the countersubject in bass.
bar 4. Subject in alto, countersubject in tenor.
bar 5½. Answer in soprano with countersubject in alto.
bars 7 and 8. Episode with flowing lines growing out of subject and countersubject in tenor of bar 8.
bar 9. After a semicadence, the counter exposition. Theme in alto, and, in stretto, in tenor.
bar 10. Theme in bass in stretto.
bar 11. Theme in soprano in stretto, countersubject in tenor.
bar 12½. Episode 2. Countersubject in soprano, followed by
bars 13, 14. Countersubject in alto in stretto, and in bass and tenor.
bar 15. Extension to cadence in
bar 16. C sharp minor (the relative).
bar 16. Theme in this key in alto, by elision.
bar 17. Theme in soprano, in stretto.
bar 19. Theme in bass—key B.
bars 20, 21. Theme in tenor, with fragment of theme in alto.

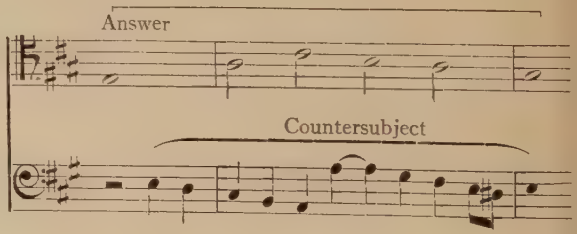
bar 22. Episode 3. Flowing lines, as extension.
bars 23, 24. Cadence in F sharp minor (the supertonic). Soprano takes a varied version of theme, by elision. (Notice this carefully; it is not a case of diminution, though some of the notes are shortened). The alto gives theme in stretto, after three beats.
bar 25. Theme varied in soprano and in bass—key C sharp minor.
bar 25½ and 26. Theme in stretto in tenor.
bar 27. Theme in diminution, taken by soprano and alto.
bars 28, 29. Theme in diminution, taken in stretto by tenor and bass.
bar 30. Theme in bass in diminution, and in alto in original form.
bar 31. Theme in diminution and contrary motion in tenor. Soprano takes ditto in stretto.
bar 32. Theme in soprano, and, by diminution and contrary motion, in tenor, with modified form in alto.
bar 33. Theme in diminution in soprano.
bar 34. Extension to
bar 35. Cadence in G sharp minor. Final section. Theme in alto—key E—in tenor, in stretto, and in soprano, with diminution and contrary motion.
bar 36. Theme in bass, on third beat, with countersubject in soprano.
bar 37. Countersubject in alto.
bar 38. Theme in soprano—countersubject in tenor.
bar 39. An episodic bar with sequential lines in three upper voices.
bar 40. Final statement of answer in bass, countersubject in alto.
bar 41 to 43. Coda—formed by extending the final lines of all four voices in sequence, leading to an episodic cadence.

We will now endeavour to write a fugue on this plan, introducing all the devices here shewn.

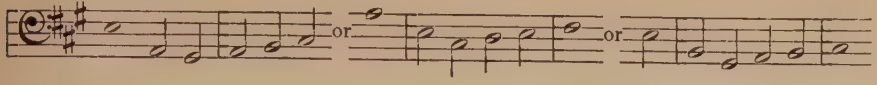
First, a simple subject must be invented. How will this do?



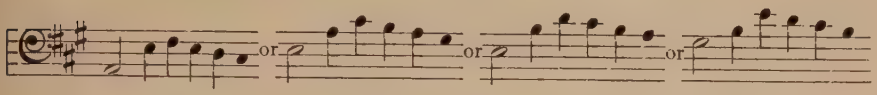
Here is its answer, with a countersubject:



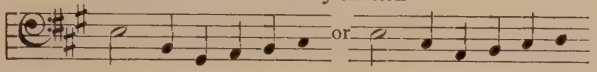
Now, how will these lines lend themselves to development? Try the subject in contrary motion.



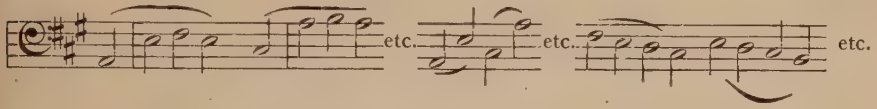
Then, in diminution, it will yield these variations:



Diminution and contrary motion

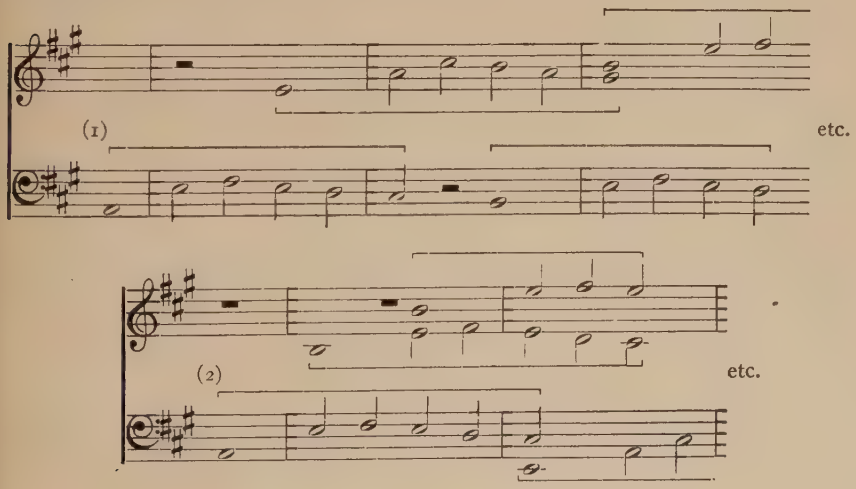


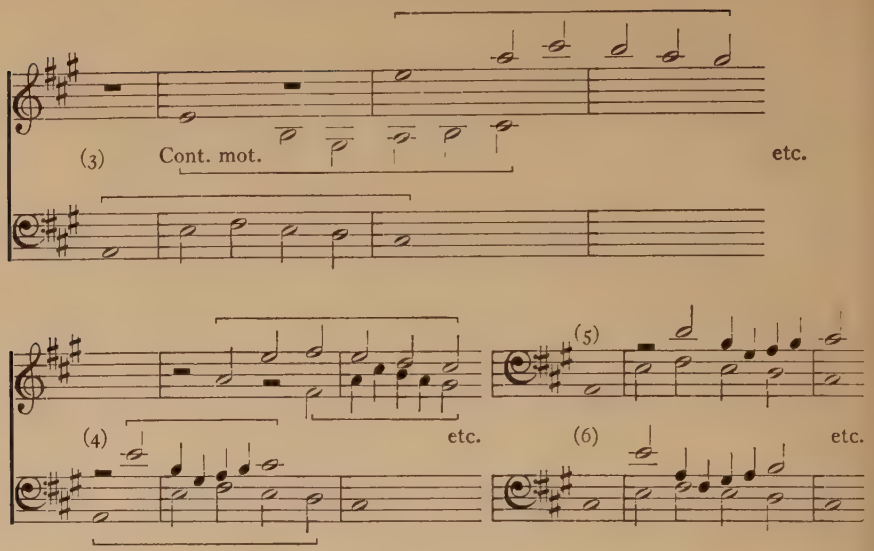
By taking portions of the subject we find that these figures might be used in sequence, etc.



From the countersubject might be obtained:

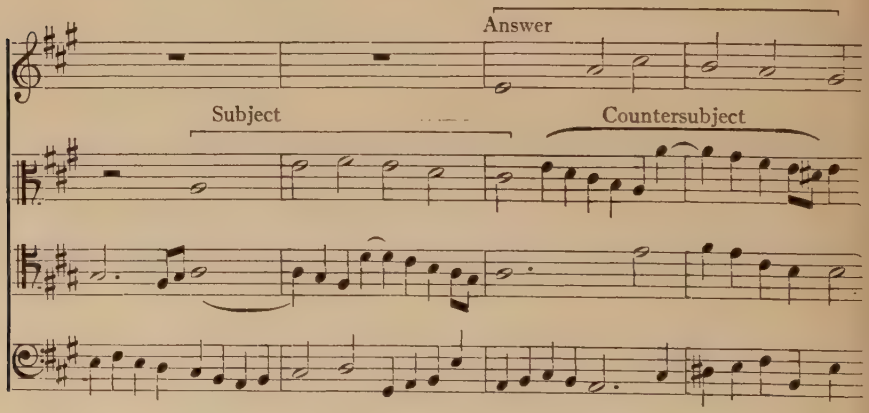
Now, are stretti feasible with this theme? We will try. Here are some possibilities.





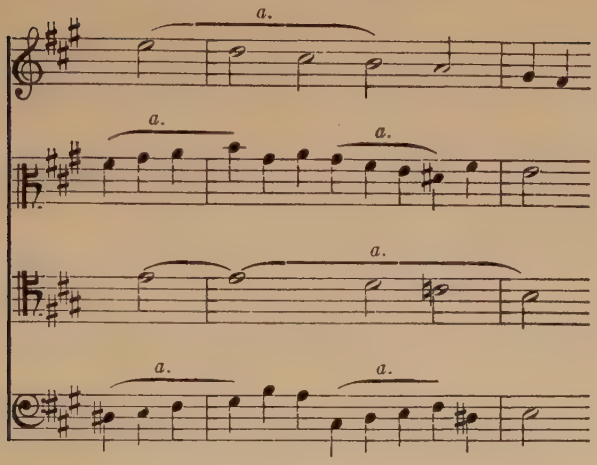
It is abundantly clear that it will be quite possible to give some stretti. We will then decide to proceed with the entire fugue, making it correspond in length and design with the model.

The subject and answer have already been given. In bar 4, third beat, the subject will be stated in the alto, and in bar 6 the answer in soprano.



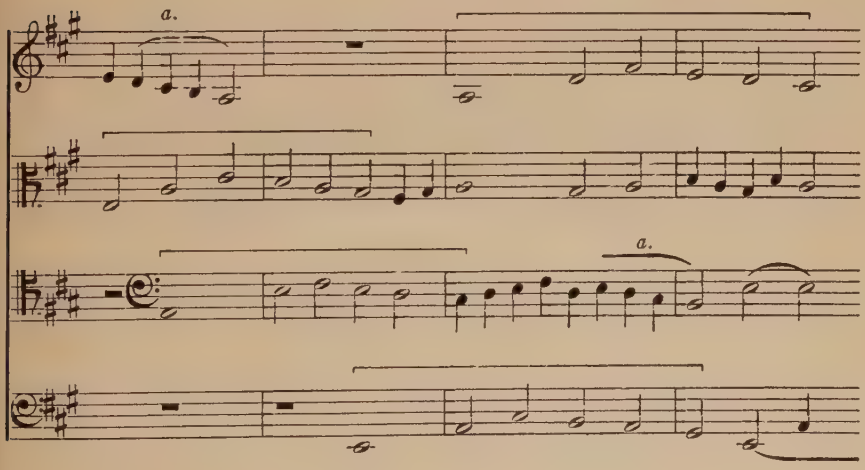
Notice how the two free voices complete the harmony, with lines that grow out of their surroundings.

The following bar is a codetta, as extension of the foregoing, leading to a semicadence in bar 9.



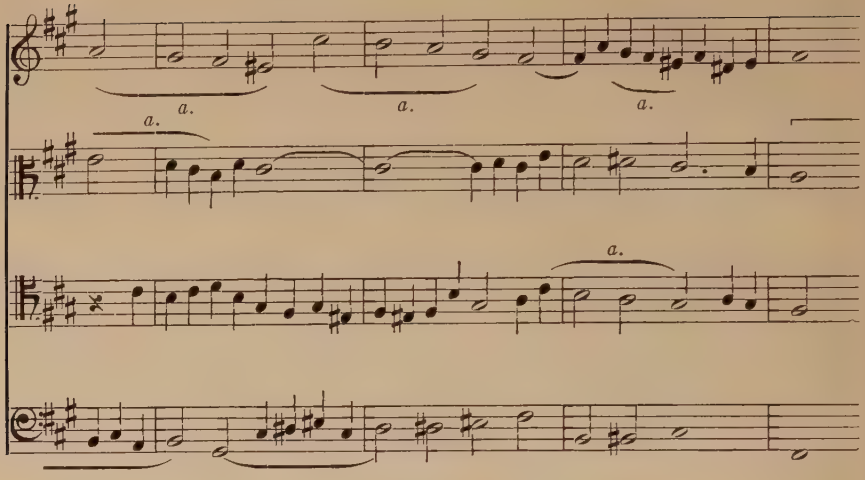
Notice figure (*a*), derived from the subject, and the flowing lines associated with it.

Now follows the counter exposition, with stretti in all voices:

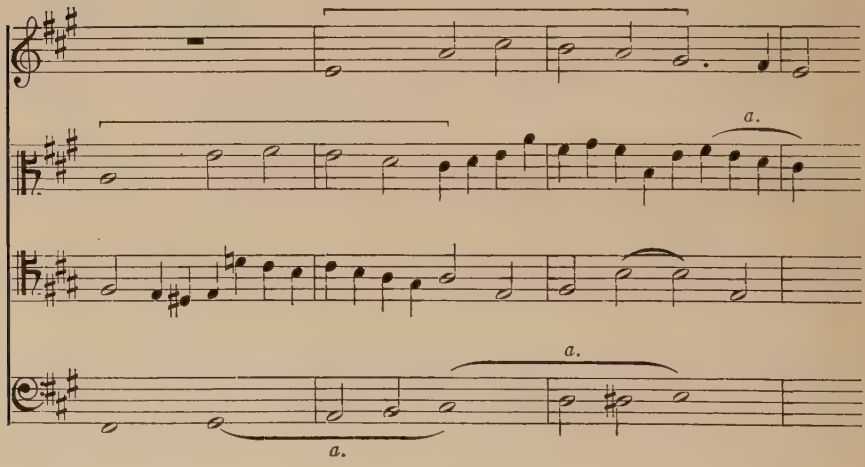


The soprano takes the subject with the leap of a fourth instead of a fifth. Such changes are very common, and perfectly legitimate.

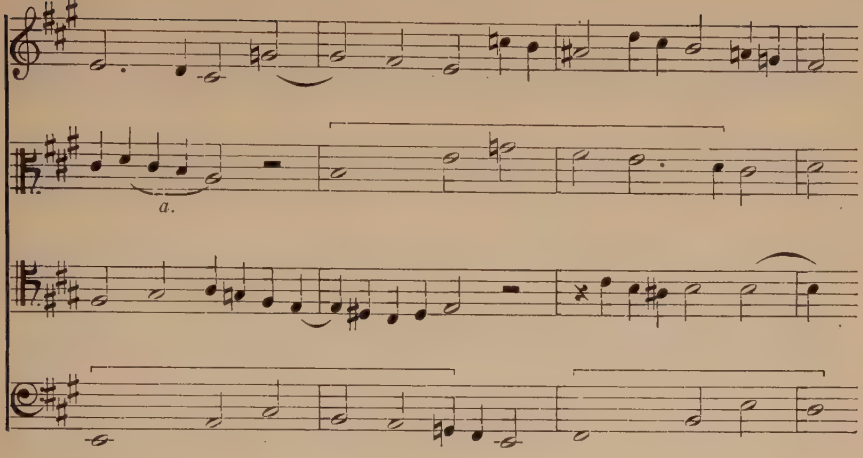
Next comes an episode, constructed of figure (*a*) in sequence and in diminution, leading to cadence in F sharp minor (the relative).



The middle section now commences, by elision.

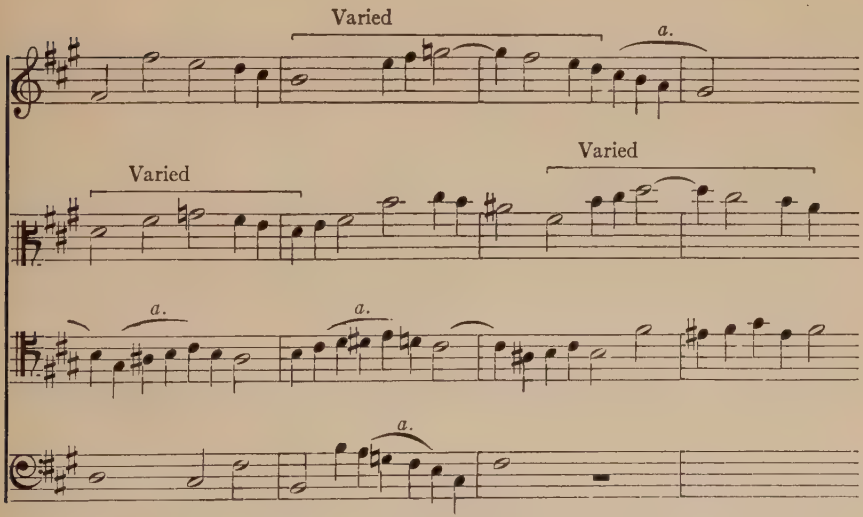


Here we have the subject in alto, with the answer in stretto, extended by two beats. Observe how the other voices use figure (*a*). We are now in the key of E (the dominant). Then follows:

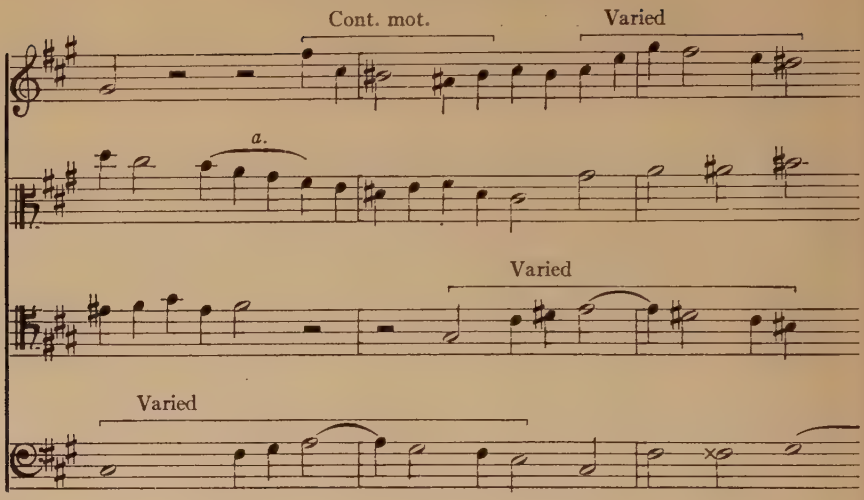


Here is the subject in bass, starting in A and modulating to E minor. The theme is in alto, in stretto, in E minor to B minor, with the bass again in stretto, using a slightly changed form of the theme.

In the next four bars is introduced a new version of the theme, including

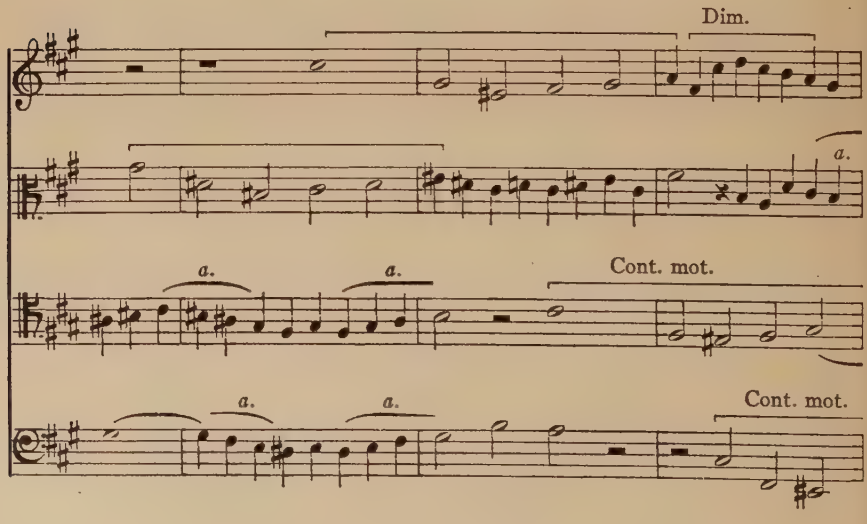


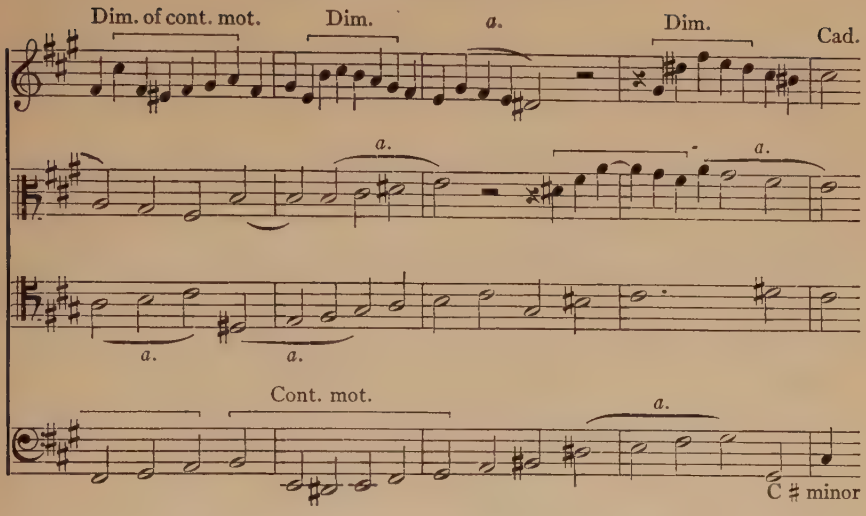
a syncopation—keys B minor, F sharp minor. Notice how the disengaged voices use figure (*a*) whenever it fits in. Next the new version of the theme is



in bass, with the soprano in diminution and contrary motion, and the tenor using the new version in stretto—keys F sharp minor and C sharp minor. Notice the chromatic harmonies produced by contrapuntal combination.

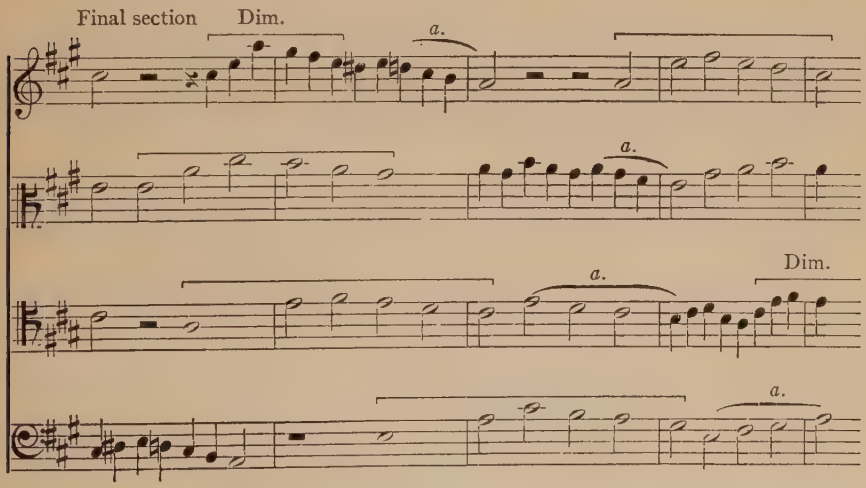
Now follows:





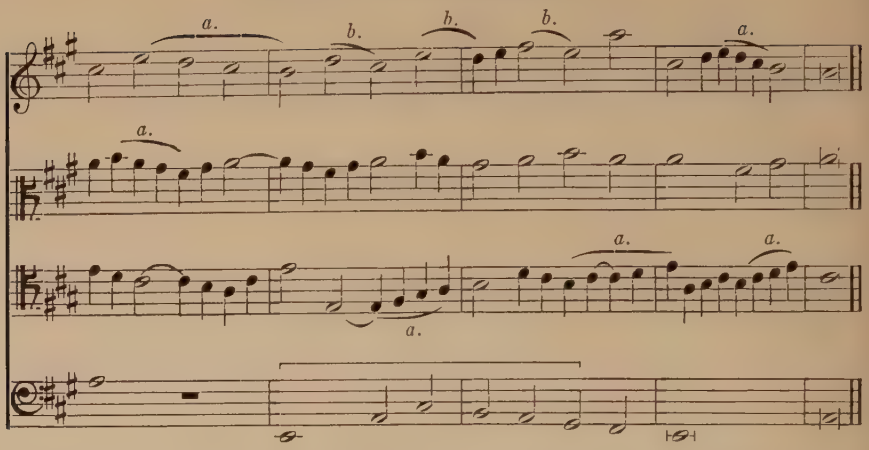
The theme is in contrary motion in alto, with the same in stretto in soprano, and again in tenor and bass, combined with the theme in diminution and contrary motion in soprano, accompanied by figure (*a*) in other voices; the whole leading to cadence in C sharp minor (the mediant).

This brings us to the final section:



Here is a stretto of the theme, in the original key, taken by alto, tenor, bass and soprano, combined with a statement in diminution by soprano, and figure (*a*) in original form and in diminution.

Four more bars remain to be written:

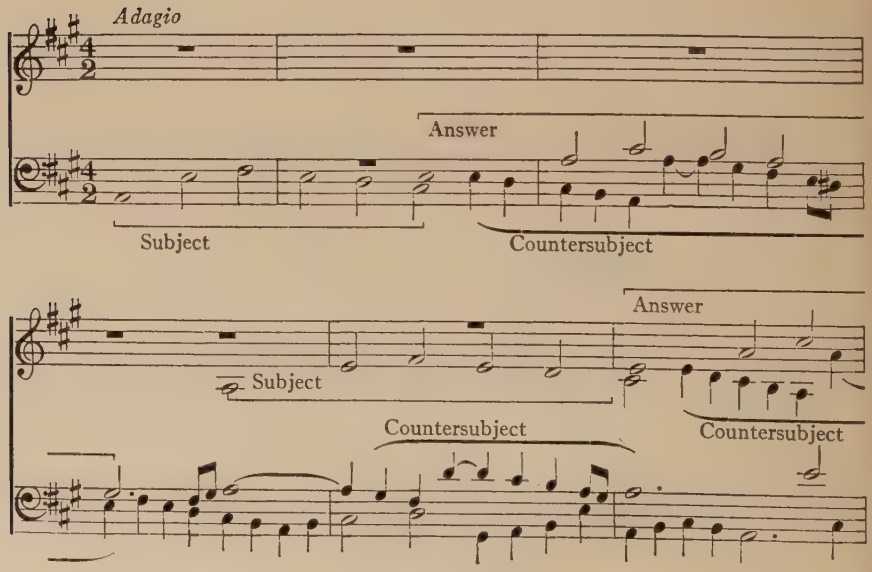


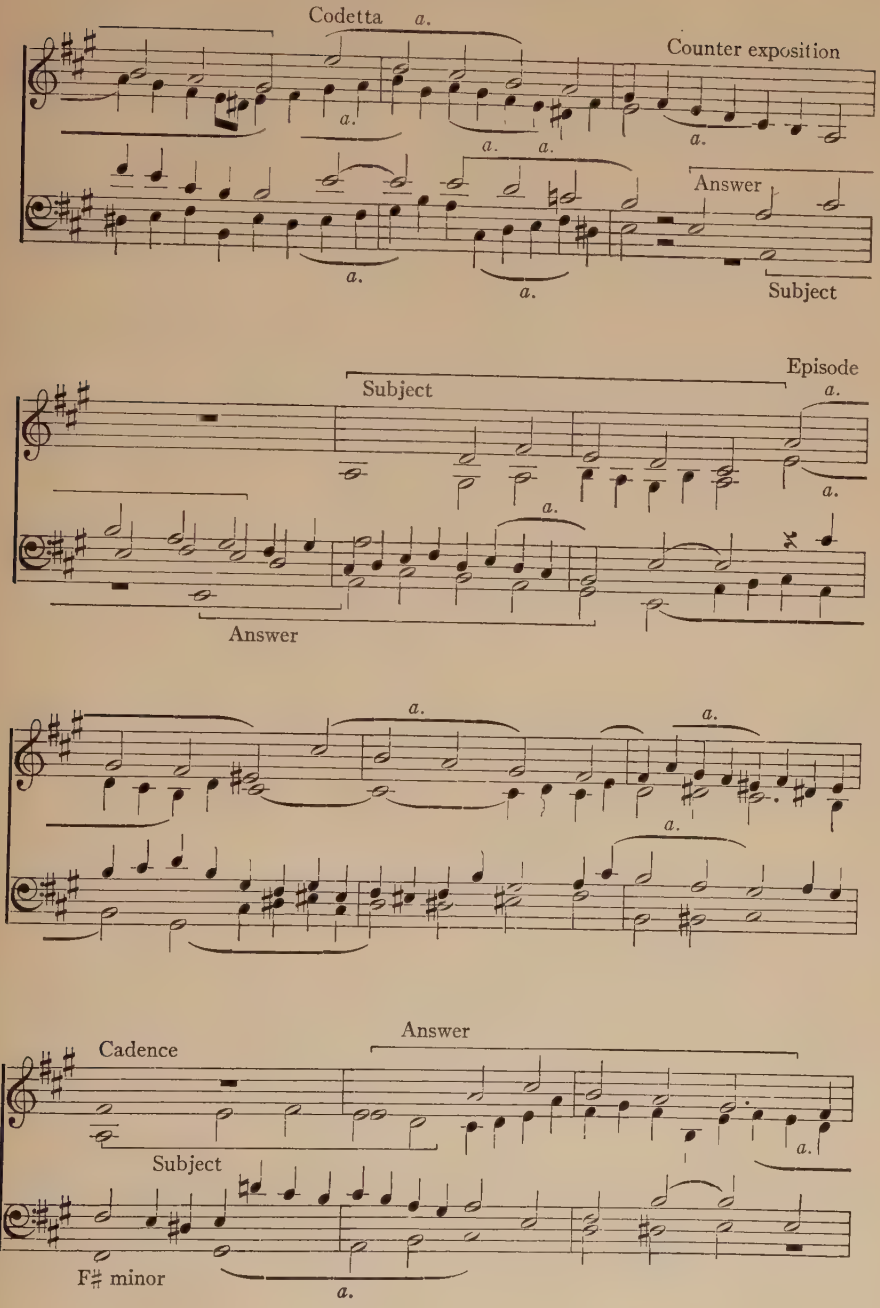
A sequence of figure (*a*) leads to the answer in bass, with figure (*a*) and figure (*b*)—half of (*a*)—in the other voices, rounding off with an extension, as coda, leading to the final cadence.

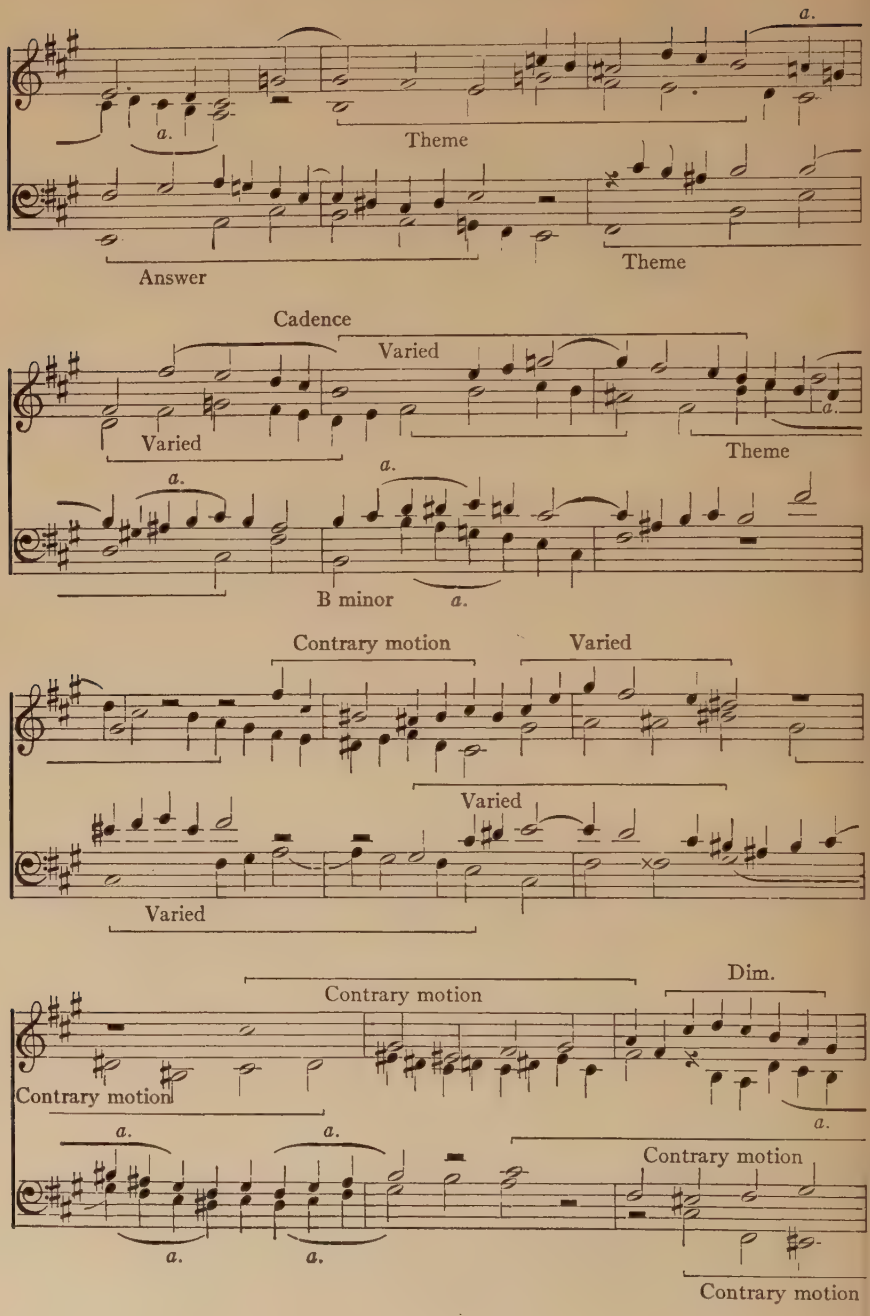
The whole fugue will now be given, in short score, to shew the complete working out.

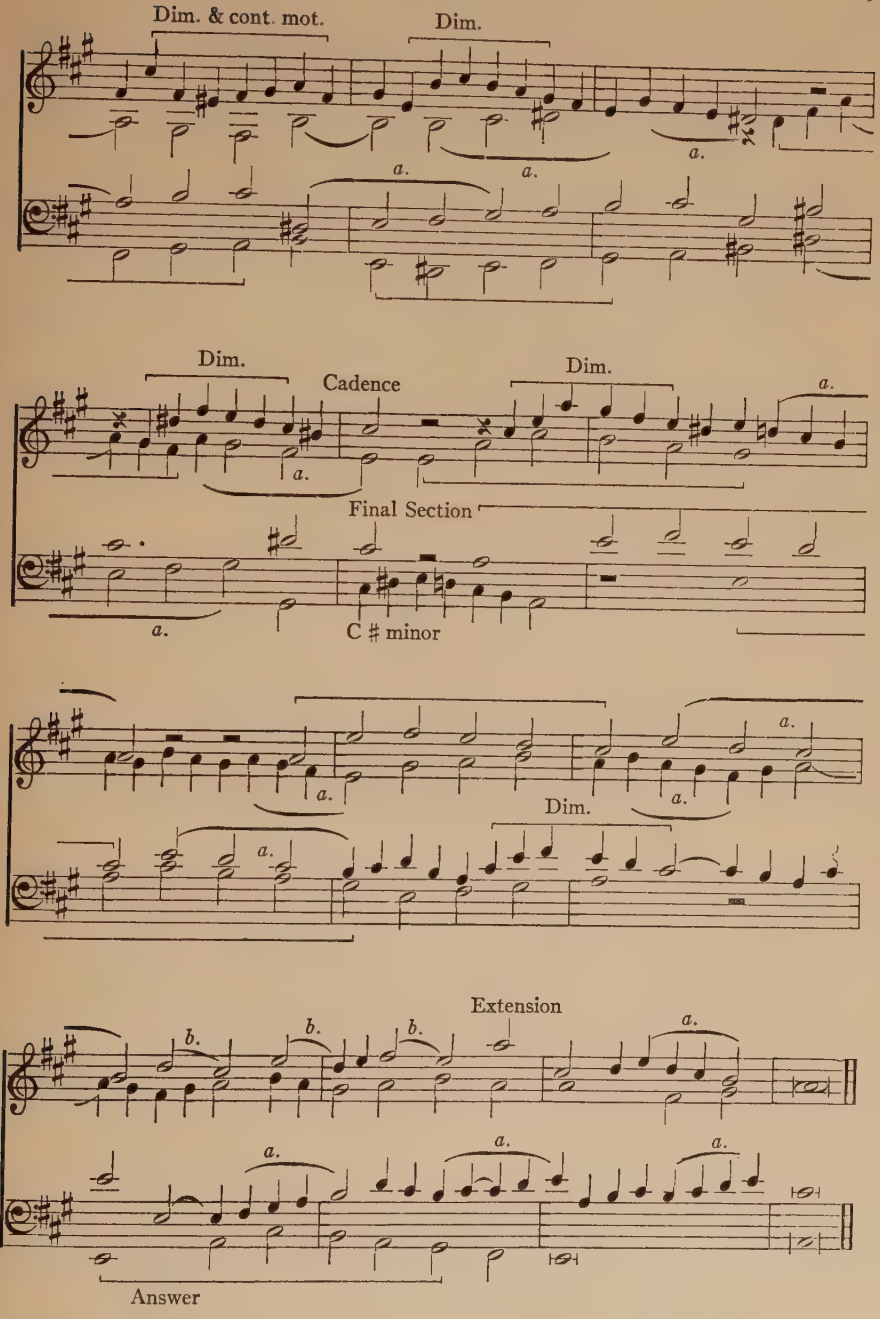
Fugue with special design.

(after Vol. II No. 9.)




Codetta
Counter exposition
Answer
Subject
Episode
Subject
Answer
Cadence
Answer
Subject
F♯ minor


a.
a.
Theme
Answer
Theme
Cadence
Varied
Varied
Theme
a.
a.
a.
B minor
a.
Contrary motion
Varied
Varied
Varied
Dim.
Contrary motion
Contrary motion
a.
a.
a.
a.
a.
Contrary motion
Contrary motion


Dim. & cont. mot.
Dim.
a.
a.
a.
Dim.
Cadence
Dim.
a.
a.
Final Section
a.
C ♯ minor
a.
a.
a.
Dim.
a.
Extension
b.
b.
b.
a.
a.
a.
a.
Answer

The task of the writer is now completed, and it is hoped that the few points touched upon in this little volume may be of use to the student.

The whole subject of fugue writing presents so many possibilities and such endless opportunities that it may truly be called a life study. There is no doubt that it represents, in its highest developments, an epitome of all real musical composition, and devotion to it will help all composers who seek for the ideal in art.

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Oh, dear! What can the matter be? (English)
The British Grenadiers (English)
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